

METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE IN RELATION TO BAPTISM
IN THE PAULINE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

All language is not of the same kind, and the mode of examining any piece of literature must be suited to the type of language in that literature. Therefore, when a biblical writer such as Paul uses metaphorical language, a right understanding of his meaning can only follow from a study which employs the rules and procedures appropriate to that type of language.

The introductory chapters explain what is meant by metaphor, and show how the metaphorical way of thought, a process of interpreting the new from the old, has a generally basic role for mankind. Therefore it is a perfectly proper form of language, and certain principles must apply when it is encountered. Particular damage has been done in the past by failure to perceive metaphorical language, or to interpret it properly. Rules and procedures are given for such study, some of which are of a general nature while others are especially relevant to our study.

Seven passages in which Paul speaks of baptism are then individually examined, Rom.6:3; Gal.3:27; Col.2:12; 1 Cor.1:13; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29. In each case the task of establishing the status of the language is done. When this reveals metaphorical language the rules previously stated are then applied to the passage in question. This shows the structure of the metaphor(s) in each case, and this helps towards understanding the 'picture'

Paul was seeking to evoke. One passage (1 Cor.15:29) did not contain metaphorical language in the reference to baptism, although it was possible that an understanding of the metaphorical nature of the context could help towards the interpretation of that literal reference to baptism.

A brief study of the baptismal references in Acts follows to show something of the difference between the language used there about baptism compared to that in the Pauline material.

The conclusion states that Paul's language about baptism is almost solely metaphorical, that half of the metaphors took virtually the same form, and that the others evoked much the same picture. That picture was of an immersion into Christ - a union, a oneness with Christ coming about in baptism. But while such union with Christ was expressed in each metaphor (and might therefore be called Paul's super-model of baptism), the implications of the union varied from passage to passage, making an all-embracing description of that union misleading.

An appendix explains why certain other passages, held by some to be baptismal, are not studied here.

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DECLARATION

I, James Alistair Brown, declare that this thesis has been researched and composed by myself.

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INTRODUCTION

It might seem to some that metaphorical language and baptism form something of an 'odd couple'. Perhaps they are not topics which naturally go together for most people. Metaphorical language, in varying forms, has been a matter for more or less scholarly debate throughout many centuries. Baptism, similarly, has had a fascination for many people from a comparatively early stage of the life of the Christian church. But the combination of the two is not usual.

We are to look at baptism in the light of the metaphorical language used about it. Such an approach is generally foreign to existing studies of baptism. No writer on baptism explores the nature of the language employed. Of the main works currently cited in any discussion on baptism, for example, by Cullmann, Flemington, Lampe, White, Schnackenburg, Jeremias, Beasley-Murray, etc., none discusses baptism in terms of metaphorical language. Usually there is no more than an occasional reference to the use of a 'figure', and there seems to be a general lack of awareness of the significance such language has on the formation and understanding of a passage. Dunn is more conscious than some of the occurrence of metaphorical language, but, probably because he does not consider it as central to his purpose, has no detailed discussion as such on it, thereby losing the potential insight.

Throughout this century there has been a gradual awakening in theological circles to the importance of metaphor. Men like Whitehead and Bevan made comprehensive studies on symbolism, but it is the last 35 years which have seen a flurry of activity, with important contributions from Farrer, Dillistone, Mascall, Bridge, Black, Macquarrie, Wheelwright, TeSelle, and recently Caird. Perhaps more than all these, Ramsey, through his many works, has stimulated a considerable amount of fresh thought in this field. The process of relating many of the insights, which are now emerging from these studies of metaphorical language, to specific areas of theological study is only in its infancy.

We have chosen to apply metaphorical language to baptism. In that area, as already said, there is a considerable gap in scholarship. Generally this is due to a failure to appreciate metaphorical language, and that in two senses: failure to recognise its occurrence in baptismal passages; and, when recognised, failure to realise and apply its significance for interpretation. This study will attempt to go some way toward meeting both these aspects of the failure, and to do so in respect of the baptismal texts in the Pauline literature.

Why study Pauline baptismal references? To look at Paul makes very good sense, because the Pauline material offers an advantage greater in degree than with almost any other New Testament writer. That

advantage is a multiplicity of references to the same subject. Although even in Paul's writings there are still not a great number, the fact that references to baptism appear in several different contexts makes it possible that a pattern of thought and language about baptism will emerge. In addition to this, and without wishing to prejudge the text, Paul could be considered to offer another advantage, which is that his style of writing would seem to be of a type profitable for our study. His letters have many illustrations, appearing to use a number of metaphors. Others have certainly noticed this. For example, Bultmann gives a list of Pauline analogies, categorising them according to their original setting. He lists nine groups, including: "Der menschliche Körper", "Das menschliche Leben in der Familie und dergl.", "Krankheit und Tod", and "Kriegswesen".¹ And Gale has more recently presented a study of 34 Pauline passages, exploring the 'pictures' used in each. From his study he believes numerous persistent characteristics concerning Paul's analogical passages emerge which provide guidance for the interpretation of the Pauline material.² All this indicates a certain fruitfulness of metaphorical-type language in Paul's

1. R. Bultmann, Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), pp.88-90.

2. See H.M. Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p.8.

letters, which in turn suggests that his baptismal passages may yield a similar fruitfulness. Therefore, Paul's letters would seem to lend themselves to the type of study of baptism we seek to do.

The decision to limit this study to the Pauline literature is based on two factors. Aside from the Gospels, there are still nearly 25 references to baptism in the New Testament. In a study where the 'tools of the trade' for studying metaphors must be explained and established, justice could hardly be done to such a number as that, hence some limiting is inevitable. We shall seek to exegete the Pauline baptismal references, using, where appropriate, the methods applicable to the study of metaphors. That task is sufficient. Also, when the work of more than one biblical writer comes under consideration, some complex issues arise, especially if comparisons are being done, notably issues of the logical status in the different works of seemingly similar statements, and whether similar words by different writers employ the same metaphor. And these questions are only properly answerable after detailed background studies in the respective authors. Again, such matters would lead this study to inordinate length, and it is in any case better to allow the main thrust of the exegetical examination of Paul to stand clear. Nevertheless, comparisons always have a great fascination, and therefore a brief look at Acts is incorporated, but with only very basic conclusions

drawn from that book in order to provide a comparison with Paul's references.

The main part of this work will therefore be a study of the texts on baptism in the Pauline literature, using the rules of metaphorical language. However, we cannot simply start with our first text and, as it were, 'launch off'. Some preliminary ground must be covered. The work of the apple-picker may centre on taking the fruit from the tree, but he must begin by climbing the trunk. We shall begin, then, with a look at what constitutes metaphor, and how it may be studied. Much of our purpose at this stage will be, as hinted already, to gather together the 'tools of the trade' for studying metaphorical language. To do this will involve drawing into one whole insights from many different writers, some of whom are more at home with poetry than religious language. From their work we shall be able to be both general and particular about metaphor. Were a sociologist to write on 'Dancing in relation to crimes of violence', he would need to say something in general about dancing, and also something regarding those aspects of dancing he considered particularly relevant to crime. Similarly we shall need to explain in general terms what is meant by metaphorical language, and state some of its overall characteristics, but also outline further points particular to the study in which we are engaged. Following that, we shall look at each Pauline text in

turn, not trying to compare text with text, but seeking to evoke whatever image Paul is using in its own context. In each case we shall look for a metaphor (or metaphors) used about baptism, and seek to understand it using the rules of metaphorical language. The sequence in which the texts are studied has a certain logic to it. We begin with Rom.6:3 because it offers a useful opportunity to display many of the facets of metaphorical language. Having done that once means that many of these features can be more easily seen when they recur in other passages, and need not be covered again in detail, freeing us to note other aspects unique to these texts. From Rom.6:3 there is a natural step to Gal.3:27 because both contain the phrase βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν. To come quickly next to Col.2:12 also makes sense since it shares with Rom.6 the idea of being buried in baptism. That leaves four texts in 1 Corinthians, and these are simply taken in their sequence in the letter. After that will come our look at Acts, and our conclusion.

CHAPTER I

METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

Theology has for some decades found itself caught in a language trap. On the one hand is the prominence of the scientific mode of thought, and therefore mode of language. As H. and H.A. Frankfort put it, in science we possess an "...instrument for the interpretation of experience, one that has achieved marvels and retains its full fascination".¹ To think scientifically is to think factually and, it is therefore supposed, to think accurately. Scientific language is respected and trusted. It is the language to be accepted. (Other ages have had other fancies. For example, as Ramsey points out, syllogism was the accepted technique in Aristotle's day, especially when all syllogistic reasoning was supposed to be reducible to a single form. And in the time of Descartes, mathematics held sway, and philosophy itself had to conform to that pattern.²)

Inconveniently then, it would seem, the Bible is not couched in scientific language. Wilder says that were the New Testament to be viewed in the light of

1. H. and H.A. Frankfort, and others, The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p.3.

2. I.T. Ramsey, "The Crisis of Faith," Lecture delivered in Birmingham, 14.9.72.

secular literary canons, "...we would have to say that the New Testament writings are in large part works of the imagination, loaded, charged and encrusted with every kind of figurative resource and invention".¹

The consequences of this language trap for theology have been two-fold. Firstly, some have been embarrassed with the Bible as it stands. Commentators would have preferred that the theology of the Bible had been written in a more respectable way. Because it was not, such commentators have sought to extricate Christianity from its embarrassment. One example of this is Rashdall's attempts to explain the imagery used in the sacrificial language of Hebrews as a technique with which the writer accommodated himself to an audience of that day:

"...it remains quite possible that in such passages the writer is to some extent identifying himself with the point of view of his hearers while leading them on to the higher and more spiritual theology which he had adopted for himself. ...His language is quite consistent with the belief that the sacrificial terms which the writer adopted were to him largely symbolic and metaphorical - unconsciously or even consciously an adaptation to the spiritual needs of men who, as he reminds them very pointedly, were not yet on the highest religious level, spiritual babes in Christ not yet fitted for solid food." 2.

1. A.N. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), p.128.

2. H. Rashdall, The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1919) p.155.

Rashdall distinguishes between how the words are actually used and how the writer would have preferred to put the matter, the point being made quite explicitly that symbolism was for "spiritual babes".

Another example comes from Caird who speaks of two writers whom he finds very wary of accepting that a metaphor is being used in the phrase 'body of Christ'. He continues: "Both writers seem to be beset with the fear that, if once they admitted a word to be a metaphor, they would forfeit the right to believe in the reality of that which it signified". ¹.

Secondly, even among those who view the use of metaphor and symbolism favourably, the attitude has arisen that such use of metaphor is an added bonus to the plain language, the icing on the cake, as it were. Plain language formed the basis of the meaning, metaphor enlivened it. Wheelwright puts this point of view in explaining the difference between "steno-language" and "expressive language". The latter is:

"...an imaginative enlargement which presupposes a common language as its initiating base of operations. Expressive language offers subtle possibilities of discourse which steno-language does not, but its possibilities are various both in kind and in degree. ...Steno-language is a must, expressive language is a can and may." ².

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1. G.B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible (London: G. Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), p.132.
 2. P. Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain - A Study in the Language of Symbolism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp.16f.

Bullinger says of the use of figurative language: "This is always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis." ¹. And Gale, pointing out that the importance of studying the parables has been recognised, then says: "It is extremely surprising, on the other hand, that relatively little comparable consideration has been given to the analogies of Paul, to those "pictures" which the apostle presents to his readers as he attempts to illustrate or reinforce the thought which he wishes to convey." ². It is his statement of the purpose which lay behind Paul's use of these "pictures" which is revealing. A little later he writes: "As Paul presented his message, whether it be in argument, in rebuke, or in exhortation, he introduced a multiplicity of analogical usages in order to clarify or to reinforce that message." ³.

What is telling in all these statements is the vocabulary - "enlargement", "can", "may", "additional force", "more life", "intensified feeling", "greater emphasis", "illustrate", "reinforce", and "clarify". To these writers metaphor is desirable, in the sense of being a useful extra. It is not fundamentally necessary,

1. E.W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1898), pp.v-vi.

2. Gale, op. cit., p.7.

3. Ibid., p.10.

but good to have.

All in all there has been an unwillingness to face up to the predominance of the imagery of the Bible. Each age has tended to believe that its method of inquiry, its type of language, was the only trustworthy type. It has supposed "that there was only one pattern of reliable argument".¹ In this age that pattern has certainly not been metaphorical. Thus some have demoted metaphor and imagery, treating it as not worthy of consideration by learned men, and even where a friendlier face has been turned in the direction of metaphor, the tendency has been to accord the language a comparatively lowly rank, granting it only the status of adornment.²

So TeSelle complains that:

"It is one of the unfortunate assumptions that metaphor and myth belong to the childhood of the human race, or at best are mere embellishments of truth we can have, now that we are logically and technically advanced, in some more direct way, whether philosophically, scientifically, or existentially."³

And Black says that despite the notorious interest in

1. Ramsey, op. cit.

2. To be fair to Gale, though he may be guilty of speaking of Paul's pictures as if they only adorn the message, he does rank them highly: "...some of these analogies have played an extremely important role in the formulation and expression of many of the most important Christian theological ideas and doctrines". Op. cit., p.7.

3. S.McF. TeSelle, Speaking in Parables (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1975), pp.40-41.

language which philosophers have, when studying metaphors one must turn to literary critics for help:

"They, at least, do not accept the commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit metaphor,' or assume that metaphor is incompatible with serious thought." ¹.

TeSelle asserts that imagery, metaphor, is the "dominant language of the New Testament". ². If this is found to be so with regard to the Pauline references to baptism, then one of two things must happen in any study of these baptismal passages. Either it is accepted that the status of the original language is inferior and therefore what is said must be reformulated in new categories (be they scientific, metaphysical, existential, or whatever). Or the original status of the language has to be appreciated as valid in its own right, and understood in its own terms.

On the surface either option seems available. But, before considering which is appropriate, we must first try and come to some understanding of what we mean by 'metaphor'.

A metaphor is normally considered to be used when a word is applied to an object to which it is not literally applicable. Aristotle wrote: "Metaphor consists in applying to a thing a word that belongs

1. M. Black, Models and Metaphors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p.25.

2. TeSelle, op. cit., p.76.

to something else...".¹ Bullinger, in common with many grammarians, explains metaphor by contrasting it with simile:

"...while the Simile gently states that one thing is like or resembles another, the Metaphor boldly and warmly declares that one thing IS the other. While the Simile says "All flesh is AS grass (I Pet.i 24), the Metaphor carries the figure across at once, and says "All flesh IS grass" (Isa.xl 6). This is the distinction between the two."²

However, we wish metaphor to be understood in a sense far broader than its grammatical definitions. Too often we find ourselves hampered by our terminology, and study of this whole area of language soon reveals that many different writers deal with fundamentally the same issues but under a wide range of names. Stanford spells out the consequence of precisely this problem:

"Authorities are in conflict on almost every issue; division is marshalled against division and sub-division against sub-division. Eventually the wood is entirely overlooked for marvelling at the abundance of the trees and many a wise man like APOLLODORUS in despair rules that all speech is figurative so that a full classification or enumeration of figures is impossible."³

Some writers continue with the distinctions between metaphor, simile, symbol, sign, analogy, etc. Others, however, perhaps realising the danger of conflict

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1. Aristotle, Poetics, 21, 1457b, quoted in W.B. Stanford, Greek Metaphor (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), p.9.
 2. Bullinger, op. cit., p.735.
 3. Stanford, op. cit., p.19.

through overmuch precision of terminology, are now either using one of these words with a stated general sense, or preferring 'umbrella' terms like model, image, or figure. One who opts for the first course of action is Gale. He uses the word 'analogy' in his work on Pauline language, but specifies his use: "The term 'analogy' is employed here to refer to any picture of a phenomenon or life situation that is presented to the mind of the reader by the Pauline language in such a way as to suggest that in it is to be found something that corresponds to what is being said." ¹. It is clear that Gale does not use the word 'analogy' in a strict, grammatical sense, but has widened its meaning to suit his more general purpose. A good example of one who chooses the second procedure - to use a general term - is Ramsey who uses the word 'model' in his various works. At one point he defines a 'model': "It is a situation with which we are all familiar, and which can be used for reaching another situation with which we are not so familiar..." ². Such a definition is intentionally general, and might easily apply to several of the more specific types of language.

Distinctions between the different varieties of such picture language are certainly possible, although

1. Gale, op. cit., p.18.

2. I.T. Ramsey, Religious Language (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1957), p.61.

precision on such matters may come easier in a grammar book than with the biblical material in which many pictures are not so readily 'pigeon-holed'. However, generally there is no need to make these distinctions, for many of these different types of picture language do the same job even although the way they do it receives a different grammatical description. Our course of action will be to state a range of meaning which is generally covered by these terms, and to exchange one term for another with considerable liberality, with predominance going to the word 'metaphor'. No essential point will stand or fall on a matter of categorisation of terms.

Towards stating that general range of meaning Macquarrie gives a helpful introductory statement:

"When a word is used metaphorically, it does not label or directly refer to what we are talking about at all, but only indirectly refers through something else. However, certain connotations of the word are carried over to what we are talking about, so as to give us a new insight into it, or to light it up for us in the manner characteristic of discourse." 1.

Two basic ingredients of metaphorical language are pinpointed here by Macquarrie - the matter under consideration, and the actual words used. A number of writers follow the lead given by Richards in employing the words 'tenor' and 'vehicle' as technical terms to distinguish these two halves of a metaphor, terms he

1. J. Macquarrie, God-Talk (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967), p.97.

felt to be necessary both for convenience and to avoid confusion. (He uses the word 'metaphor' of the whole double unit, and tenor and vehicle to avoid "clumsy descriptive phrases" such as 'the original idea' and 'the borrowed one'; 'what is really being said or thought of' and 'what it is compared to', etc. ^{1.}) The 'meaning' of a metaphor is something else, as Richards explains:

"...in many of the most important uses of metaphor, the co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction. That the vehicle is not normally a mere embellishment of a tenor which is otherwise unchanged by it but that vehicle and tenor in co-operation give a meaning of more varied powers than can be ascribed to either." ^{2.}

In that statement Richards gives us a clue regarding why metaphor can be necessary. Wheelwright says: "The plain fact is that not all facts are plain. There are meanings of high, sometimes of very highest importance, which cannot be stated in terms strictly defined." ^{3.}

How does the theologian speak of that for which no ordinary words can suffice? To take our particular instance of baptism, it is possible to think of vocabulary sufficient to describe the physical event of

1. I.A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.96.

2. Ibid., p.100.

3. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.86.

wetting with water - the location of the water, the amount of water, the appearance of the baptisand before and after the wetting, etc. But the same type of vocabulary cannot straightforwardly describe any intended theological consequences of the physical event. Contrary to much popular opinion special words are not generally available to the theologian to enable him to overcome this problem, the problem of speaking about the literally unspeakable.¹ The biblical writers did not invent new vocabulary, as Wilder says:

"The founders of Christianity used the languages and idioms of the people: not a sacred or holy language, nor a learned language, nor did they encourage a static language. Similarly with respect to styles and forms: these were not esoteric, either in the sense of Jewish or Hellenistic arcana, or holy formulas. ...The languages and idioms used by the Christians were those of the wide publics of their time and place." 2.

The very existence today of lexicons and theological word books, giving their readers some indication of the vast background of 'secular' use in their day of biblical, theological words, shows the truth of Wilder's statement. The biblical words were common words, widely used and understood. How then did their writers speak of the unspeakable? "The language used in religion is the same as that used in other universes of discourse. It is not a special sort of language, but

1. Caird mentions one possible exception when speaking of God, and that is the word 'holy'. Op. cit., p.18.

2. Wilder, op. cit., p.26.

just ordinary language put to a particular use." ¹.

Those last few words of Hudson are the vital ones -

"...ordinary language put to a particular use". There

is nothing special about the language which is used,

but it is the method in which it is employed which is

intended somehow to speak of that which is not plain.

This is the way of metaphor, as TeSelle says: "There

are no "technical" words in the New Testament, no

words with special meanings; there are only words which

have been made to mean more than they usually mean." ².

And she continues:

"...metaphor is the poet's way to try and define something for which there is no dictionary meaning; it is his or her attempt to be precise and clear about something for which ordinary language has no way of talking." ³.

So, with metaphor, we have an intended meaning

which cannot be expressed in ordinary language, but

is spoken of indirectly by the use of other language.

This 'other language' is what we call metaphor, symbol,

figure, model, or some other.

Therefore, when Paul, in a discussion of a Christian's relationship with God, describes the

1. W.D. Hudson, "Some remarks on Wittgenstein's account of religious belief," Talk of God, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, II (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), p.40.

2. TeSelle, op. cit., p.37.

3. Ibid., p.39.

Christian as being "justified", ^{1.} he is taking a legal word, a familiar word, and using that. He does not invent a new word, but uses a known one to evoke a picture of the action of God toward a man. The word is odd in the context (as Ramsey would say), for it belongs in the day to day affairs of law courts, trials, prosecutions, etc. Paul is discussing a believer's situation before God, not law courts. But he uses "justification" which, as Macquarrie put it, "does not label or directly refer to what we are talking about at all, but only indirectly refers through something else". What has happened is that Paul feels that the language of "something else" - the law court - is appropriate for this context (with the intended oddity of a judge who allows the guilty to go unpunished). The law court language is "carried over" (Macquarrie) to how God deals with men. This is metaphor. ^{2.}

1. Rom.5:1.

2. This process of the actual linking of symbol and meaning is given many varied names. Apart from Macquarrie's phrase, many others are used. Whitehead says: "The organic functioning whereby there is transition from the symbol to the meaning will be called 'symbolic reference'." A.N. Whitehead, Symbolism, its Meaning and Effect (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p.9. Dillistone uses two more terms: "The symbol leads the hearer or the watcher to conceive or to imagine an object or an event." F.W. Dillistone, Christianity and Symbolism (London: Collins, 1955), p.25. Other writers have their own words: "disclosure", "making the connection", "lighting up", "evocation", "association", etc., and we shall find these terms recurring.

An essential feature of metaphorical language, therefore, is that it works from a base in 'the familiar'. It involves something of a leap from the known to the unknown. TeSelle puts it this way: "Metaphorical language not only connects this with that, here with there, but demands that one partner of the association, at least, be concrete, sensuous, familiar, bodily. It will abide no abstractions, no head without a body, no mystical flights..."¹.

It is fundamental to the nature of metaphor that something not hitherto understood (or only partially understood) is now seen through or disclosed by something else already understood. The person using metaphor must begin with something previously known.

Nevertheless, some sort of leap is required in the process. The familiar provides the stepping stone to the unfamiliar, but the hearer or reader must step across and make the connection. Ramsey illustrates this:

"Insofar as I have appealed to a disclosure, to something which breaks in on us, to a situation in which we pass beyond any and all the models we have developed to date, when (as we say) we 'jump to it', there is involved what might be called logical leap, just as there is a logical leap between seeing ' $1+\frac{1}{2}+\frac{1}{4}+\frac{1}{8}+\frac{1}{16}...$ ' and saying '2'." ².

Of course, in Ramsey's illustration there is a certain

1. TeSelle, op. cit., p.61.

2. I.T. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism (London: Sheldon Press, 1974), p.72.

inevitability - given, perhaps, an appropriate amount of intelligence by the observer - that the leap to '2' be made. By no means, as Ramsey would agree and as we shall see later, is the disclosure always guaranteed.

Another factor which is of the essence of metaphor is that it generates movement. TeSelle writes: "Thus we move, through metaphor, to meaning; metaphor is a motion from here to there." ¹. And later she says: "...metaphoric meaning is a process, not a momentary, static insight; it operates like a story, moving from here to there, from "what is" to "what might be"." ². A metaphor can only work if it enables this movement from here to there to take place. Langer says: "Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects." ³. If a word or phrase does not have this ability to move the reader from the known to the unknown, then it is not, or has ceased to be, a metaphor. ⁴. A metaphor must have this dynamic quality in order to work.

Having now outlined the general way in which

1. TeSelle, op. cit., p.32.

2. Ibid., p.37.

3. S.K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, p.60, quoted in Dillistone, op. cit., p.24.

4. When a word loses the power it once had to 'move' meaning in this fashion, it is commonly called a 'dead metaphor'. We shall discuss this more fully shortly.

metaphorical language functions, let us beware again of finding ourselves bound by the traditional, grammatical idea of metaphor. While "All flesh IS grass" is certainly a classic example, what we are talking of here, and shall be subsequently, is the 'spirit' of metaphor and not just the 'letter'. The classic pattern requires, for example, the statement of two terms with the one revealing something about the other: 'all flesh', and 'grass', with grass telling us something about the nature of all flesh. But perhaps a single word may function metaphorically, as on some occasions is the case with biblical words like 'cross', 'sin', 'Christ', and 'crucified', which, as well as referring to specific things, people, or events, can also be words with a built-in theological component. Gale gives some further Pauline examples:

"Sometimes the picture is offered suddenly through the metaphorical use of a single word, as in Phil. 3:2: "Look out for the dogs." Again and again a word simply points to a picture, so to speak, when that word is one that was frequently associated with a given life situation: in Gal.4:5, for example, the verb "redeem" points to the picture of a slave ransomed from bondage; in Rom.3:24 the verb "justified" points to a scene in a court of law." ¹.

Macquarrie is not willing to go so far as to call such words 'metaphors', but is conscious of their connotative powers. He says:

"...as used in a theological context, such as a discussion of the atonement, the word 'cross'

1. Gale, op. cit., p.11.

does not simply denote a particular kind of instrument of execution, but rather connotes all that Christ's death has come to mean in the Christian experience of salvation; the word 'salvation', in turn, is not the name for an empirically observable process - though presumably there would be some perceptible accompaniments - but stands rather for the Christian's experience of letting himself be grasped by God." 1.

These phrases: "a word simply points to a picture", "does not simply denote...but rather connotes", and "not the name for...but stands rather for" show that in individual words the metaphoric process is taking place. These are 'loaded' words, words acting as metaphors. Of course, this only happens within a particularly structured situation which reveals the metaphoric sense of the word. As Stanford points out, no word is per se metaphorical for, strictly speaking, no word is per se significant at all. Words need a context. 2. But a word can be charged with meaning by its use in one context and carry enough of that meaning with it to its new context, and there act as a metaphor. That is what we are speaking of here. Let us beware, then, of being hidebound by traditional definitions and look for the spirit of metaphor wherever it is to be found.

What is metaphor? It is that process whereby a new understanding is gained into some matter by means of the use of a word with whose meaning we are

1. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.98.

2. See Stanford, op. cit., p.8.

already familiar. Sometimes that will involve analogy, sometimes simile, sometimes classic metaphor, sometimes none of these but only a 'loaded' word. However it is done, some kind of transition is made from the old to the new.

We need now to consider the importance of metaphor. We have already encountered the view that metaphor is a device whereby something already stated in 'plain' language may be further explained by using, as it were, an illustration. Metaphor in this case may be regarded as an enlivening technique to be employed by poets or, even, by writers who do not have a sufficient mastery of straightforward language. Metaphor is then what Black calls a "decoration", something to "entertain and divert".¹

This allows metaphor little importance. Indeed the phrase 'mere metaphor' has entered our language as a commonplace and schoolchildren are encouraged to avoid such things in their essays. When metaphor is looked at in this light, the embarrassment we noted before concerning its occurrence in the Bible is understandable. Inevitably, the temptation is to ignore its existence and to try and treat the language literally (which, as we shall find, is a dangerous enterprise).

Yet such a temptation only exists if the implication of the phrase 'mere metaphor' - that metaphor

1. Black, Models and Metaphors, p.34.

is an unnecessary diversion - is correct. Can it be shown that metaphor holds a far more vital, indeed basic, role in language than it has been generally accorded? Is it an optional extra, or do we in some way need metaphor?

To answer these questions we must begin by considering how we deal with a new matter or experience. We might naively assume that, presented with something new, our mind simply tucks that new fact away, places it as one of the many pieces of knowledge which the mind stores. Yet, of course, that is not how it happens, for our minds do not consist of so many pigeon-holes, with a particular number as yet unfilled, waiting for material to be placed in them. Rather, our minds are better considered as interpretative organs, assessing and analysing any material presented in the light of the 'already known'. The mind tests out the world around it. Kelly puts it this way:

"Man looks at his world through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. The fit is not always very good. Yet without such patterns the world appears to be such an undifferentiated homogeneity that man is unable to make any sense out of it. Even a poor fit is more helpful to him than nothing at all." 1.

Of course, these patterns are not rigid and finalised,

1. G.A. Kelly, A Theory of Personality (1963), pp.8-9, quoted in J. Britton, Language and Learning (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970), p.17.

but fluid and open to revision as life progresses:

"The constructions one places upon events are working hypotheses which are about to be put to the test of experience. As one's anticipations or hypotheses are successively revised in the light of the unfolding sequence of events, a construction system undergoes a progressive evolution." 1.

Britton uses his daughter to provide an example of this general process at work:

"Clare, at two years three months, met strawberries for the first time. 'They're like cherries,' she said. And when she had tasted them 'They're just like sweeties'. And a little later, 'They are like red ladybirds'. Successive experiences had made some things familiar to her, and she draws on these in order to 'place' the new experience. From the familiar she creates links, a context, for the new." 2.

So, in the reception of new knowledge, what we have is a process whereby the new thing is 'fitted in' by our present knowledge. It must take its place as understood by the already known.

Now, when we wish to express new knowledge, something very similar to this process takes place. We do not generally pluck a new sound out of the air as the word for a new thing, inventing a new combination of syllables at random, when a fresh experience has to be named. 'Plain speech' may, for some, be the most desirable way of talking, but it is hardly possible when no 'plain' word exists to be used.

How then do we speak of something new? TeSelle

1. Kelly, op. cit., pp.72-3, quoted pp.17-18.

2. Britton, op. cit., p.72.

also uses the act of a child in illustration: "A child looking at a mountain stripped of foliage might say, "that mountain is bald," transferring her perception of her grandfather's pate to the mountain." ¹. The child uses a familiar word to describe the unfamiliar sight. He or she knows no 'plain' word, so transfers a word from another context and, for better or worse, gives a description of the scene. Now, we might be tempted to say, 'Yes, but that is just childish language'. Yet, if we consider the terms an adult might have used to describe that same mountain devoid of trees - "barren", "bare", or even "infertile" - it only takes a moment to realise that the 'adult' words are no different in type from those of the child in that they also are transferred words. And that is to say they are words functioning metaphorically.

After reflection, it soon becomes clear that nearly all new language arises in this way. (Among the few exceptions would be the devising of a 'brand name' or perhaps a technical name in some branch of science. Even in these, there may still be a transference of names taking place, e.g., in a term like 'pasteurisation'.) When it has to consider a new event, the human mind, as we said, thinks metaphorically - seeing and assessing the new in the light of the old. When it has to speak of a new event, human

1. TeSelle, op. cit., p.43.

language likewise speaks metaphorically - it attempts to "pour new content into old bottles". 1.

TeSelle speaks of how fundamental this process is:

"...metaphor follows the footsteps of nature; that is, metaphor follows the way the human mind works. Metaphor is not only a poetic device for the creation of new meaning, but metaphor is as ultimate as thought. It is and can be the source for new insight because all human discovery is by metaphor. ...Metaphor is, for human beings, what instinctual groping is for the rest of the universe - the power of getting from here to there. ...The future is never an abstraction totally unrelated to our particular and familiar presents and pasts; it is the sometimes subtle, sometimes violent renovation and fulfillment of what is familiar to us." 2.

Richards shares this view. He pleads for a better developed theory of metaphor than is yet available, for the traditional theory noticed only a few of the modes of metaphor, and thus limited its application of the term 'metaphor'. He goes on:

"And thereby it made metaphor seem to be a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words, whereas fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom." 3.

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1. Black's description of the purpose of metaphor and model-making, op. cit., p.239.
 2. TeSelle, op. cit., pp.56-7. Her use of the word "all" is rather bold, but the general thrust of her argument, that the mind operates by making connections, has validity.
 3. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p.94.

What TeSelle and Richards are saying is that metaphor, understood in a wide sense, is not an added extra but a foundation stone of all thought and language. At times this has been claimed for so-called 'primitive societies'. Bridge, for example, says:

"...primitive cosmologies and man's place in them were thought out and explained in artistic terms, ^{1.} not because the arts were a substitute for logical thinking, but simply because they were the only and the natural terms in which men thought and expressed themselves. An idea was not first 'thought out', in our sense of the words, and then expressed in artistic form. The making of the form constituted the thinking..." ^{2.}

Bridge says that such societies were, by our standards, "more or less intellectually inarticulate". ^{3.} But if the human mind generally works by connections, by a process which may be described as metaphoric, then "the only and the natural terms" for primitive man are very similar to those used in societies considered to be advanced.

The danger here is to press this point too far. If this is done, then either the case is overstated, or words like 'metaphor' are made so wide in meaning as to be hopelessly imprecise. What seems to have validity is that, on the whole, the human mind makes

1. By "artistic terms" Bridge means myth, poetry, painting, sculpture, and even dance forms.

2. A.C. Bridge, Images of God, an Essay on the Life and Death of Symbols (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960), p.16.

3. Ibid.

connections in order to make and interpret new discoveries, and, parallel to this, when speaking of such discoveries, does so in terms already known to it. This process may be described as 'metaphoric'.

If there is a general validity to this, though, why is it not more widely recognised? Why is metaphorical language not given a higher status?

Skelton offers one very mundane explanation:

"It could be maintained that the associative power of words remains unperceived in normal conversation, unless it is deliberately emphasized, and that when we read or hear a word we simply notice a central and obvious significance and are aware of no nuances or ambiguities whatsoever. ...After all, when someone says, 'I am going to the fish shop', we do not think of the sea or of swimming or trawlers." 1.

Certainly man has a habit of not noticing that which is very close to him, and the claim is being made that the metaphorical method is basic. Ramsey lends support to this view. He speaks of the desire of the early Christians to tell others about a "disclosure" they had found, something unique and distinctive. To do this they could only use language already familiar to prospective converts, but they mixed traditional phrases in unusual ways in order to say something new about Jesus Christ, as, for example, in the early Acts'

1. R. Skelton, Poetic Truth (London: Heinemann, 1978), p.16. TeSelle agrees with this. Speaking of metaphorical language she says: "This is such a common and at the same time complex process that often we are unaware of it...". Op. cit., p.57.

speeches where Jesus is spoken of as God's servant, child, Christ, Lord, Saviour, Prince, Author of Life, etc. By such riotous mixing of familiar terms, Ramsey says, they evoked a fresh disclosure for the new converts. Then he adds:

"I am not saying, for a moment, that St Peter explicitly gave his subject this kind of logical structure; that he deliberately constructed it with such a logical plan in mind. What I am saying is that because the speech of St Peter succeeded (where it did), we ourselves can in fact discern such a logical complexity in the speech now." 1.

Metaphor is there - not because it is consciously put in - but because that is the way creative, new language is expressed. Because it is the natural way of speaking the mechanics of it generally go unnoticed. Yet metaphor is there to be discerned.

But there is a further reason why there is a lack of awareness of metaphor, and it has to do with the very brief 'life-span' of a metaphor. TeSelle explains: "Of course most of our language is not obviously metaphorical; we are surrounded by dead metaphors which make up our literal, everyday language and which allow us to write dictionaries. But these dead metaphors were once alive..." 2.

The distinction between live and dead metaphor is a matter of some importance. Under the heading

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.154.

2. TeSelle, op. cit., p.50.

'Metaphor', Fowler says:

"In all discussion of m. it must be borne in mind that some metaphors are living, i.e., are offered and accepted with a consciousness of their nature as substitutes for their literal equivalents, while others are dead, i.e., have been so often used that speaker and hearer have ceased to be aware that the words used are not literal...". 1.

This is a feature of language much stressed by many writers. Language is not static. Caird points out that where a dictionary in one generation puts the label fig. beside a word, that same dictionary in a subsequent generation will drop the label because the users are no longer conscious of the word's origin. What was once the transferred sense is now thought of as the primary, and therefore the literal, sense. He continues:

"A large proportion of the word-stock of any language will prove on scrutiny to have come into existence in this fashion. Consider for example the metaphorical use of parts of the body...: we are not normally conscious of using a metaphor when we speak of the eye of a needle or the mouth of a river, or even of our hearts being where our treasure is (Matt.6:21)." 2.

Dictionary language, then, is largely dead-metaphor language. Meanings have been transferred and become so commonly used that the awareness of their metaphorical nature is gone. Since our language deals mainly with day to day matters, and we do not attempt to speak of

1. H.W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp.348-9.

2. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.66.

new things, most of our words are dead metaphors. They are no longer being used creatively but have become commonplace labels. Yet the important point to remember is that the predominance of literal language does not show that it has a higher value of any sort,¹ but simply that an eventual turning into literal language is the natural tendency of the originally metaphorical language:

"It is true that abstract thought and language is the latest and therefore some have said it is the highest human accomplishment. There is certainly a progression of language toward the abstract; it appears to be the natural completion of symbolic language. But it is an unfortunate development, particularly...in theology, to consider the natural completion of language as its "highest" development." 2.

The picture of language which we are being given,

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1. Nor is it somehow more truthful. Caird says: "'Our rector is literally the father of every boy and girl in the village.' It is easy enough to see what the examination candidate who wrote this sentence wanted to say: the rector was one of those clergymen whose parishioners address them as 'Father', and for every child in the village this expressed something real. Unfortunately, like many adults who ought to know better, she confused the real with the literal. ...Literal and metaphorical are terms which describe types of language, and the type of language we use has very little to do with the truth or falsity of what we say and with the existence or non-existence of the things we refer to." Op. cit., p.131.
 2. TeSelle, op. cit., p.63. She goes on to say that it is this "unfortunate development" which has meant the hegemony of abstract, systematic language in theology, and the accompanying depression of more basic forms such as parable, story, poem, and confession. "It is upon these primary forms - metaphorical forms - that all theological reflection relies." Op. cit., p.63.

then, is this. When a new experience is encountered for the first time, in order to say something about it an observer transfers a word or words from something else to it. These words become the vehicle for envisaging, and for describing, the new thing. It is by these transferred words that this fresh experience becomes known and gradually comes to be accepted. After some more time, the fact that these words did not originally mean this new thing at all is forgotten, so accustomed have people become to them in that context. Perhaps, in fact, the original signification of the words is completely forgotten. From then on the new thing (no longer new, of course) is defined by the words once upon a time transferred from another context. That definition is now considered to be the 'literal meaning' of these words.

To say that this is the inevitable pattern for all language would be dangerous. There are always exceptions: for example, some of those 'technical' words mentioned earlier which are not only chosen for a particular purpose but, perhaps because of that fact, also retain that one meaning. The general truth of the pattern would certainly seem to hold for the largest part of language. It would seem to be the usual pattern - the 'rule', as it were, to which exceptions would have to be found.

Thus our question: 'Do we need metaphor?' answers itself. Generally, we cannot get away from it.

CHAPTER II

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

We have concluded that far from being an optional extra, metaphor has a very real place in language. It is not only respectable, but to some extent lies at the very roots of our language. Where now there is a literal statement, once there may have been a metaphor. Thus metaphor is important, not to be treated lightly.

Given this situation, any study of language which may include metaphor must hold certain principles of interpretation in mind. We are not speaking here of the finer points of the operation of metaphors, of guidelines which will apply in some cases but not others, but of ground rules which must be applied to all metaphoric discourse. The four principles which are outlined here all flow as consequences from the nature and role of metaphor with which we have already dealt.

To begin it may be useful to state the obvious, and that is that metaphorical and literal language are not the same. Where the latter purports to use language in a plain, denotative way, the former makes no such pretence, but contains transferred meaning, using language often in an evocative way. Those who study written material, then, are obliged first of all to ask which is before them, metaphorical or literal

language. If a person sees a face before him, it is of some importance for his behaviour whether he decides that this is a flesh and blood face, or merely a portrait. Similarly, "...a proper appreciation of the images must be dependent upon a prior recognition that they are indeed images and not bare facts." ¹.

Metaphors behave in a different way from literal language. (Some aspects of that behaviour we shall come to later.) If a traveller is in a foreign country, it is of no avail for him to behave according to the laws of the country from which he has come, but rather obedience is necessary to the laws of the land in which he finds himself. Thus Farrer states an important point: "That images are the stuff of revelation, and that they must be interpreted according to their own laws." ².

Of course, problems often arise precisely through a lack of awareness of the nature of the language before the reader. It is not always obvious that metaphorical language is being used, especially when, in the case of the Bible, we are told that there is a message about something which the simplest can know as well as the expert. Ramsey continues this theme: "But that is still not to say that the logical structure

1. Bridge, op. cit., p.150.

2. A. Farrer, The Glass of Vision (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), p.51.

of the Bible is 'plain' and 'straightforward', unless we make the mistake of supposing that a language which is grammatically simple, or in some other way psychologically assimilable, has a straightforward logic." ¹.

Later he expands on this point:

"We all know what 'mother of Topsy' means; but 'Mother of God', while similar in grammar, cannot have anything like the same logical structure. $\frac{2}{3}$ may be very similar in appearance to $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{22}{27}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, but its logical behaviour is entirely different: hence its appearance in so many mathematical recreations and parlour games." ².

Skelton illustrates this usefully from poetry.

He takes four statements, all of which use the word 'blood':

1. His blood ran cold at the sight.
2. He decided to volunteer as a blood donor.
3. He gave his life's blood for his country.
4. There was bad blood between them.

Then he stresses how differently the word 'blood' is being used in each of these. Even where, in sentences 2 and 3, there appears to be a similarity of usage, the other words in the sentences alter the emotive

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, pp.93-4. Nowottny similarly makes the point that there is no necessary connection between difficulty of diction and profundity of thought. She quotes examples of poems "whose diction is hardly more baffling than that of a nursery-rhyme, but whose over-all meaning has as much claim to profundity as a poem full of verbal puzzles". W. Nowottny, The Language Poets Use (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), p.221.

2. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.165.

effect. In 3, 'life' and 'country' have rich associative possibilities which colour the reference there to 'blood'. In 2, 'donor' and 'decided' have, he says, an intellectual, determinate quality which prevents 'blood' from achieving any strength on the irrational, intuitive level. He concludes:

"It can be seen from this, perhaps extreme, example that a word with a big associative fringe can alter its essential meaning to such an extent in different contexts that not only the emotional effect, but the actual concept, changes. One cannot imagine the 'blood' of sentence 3 running cold, or the blood of sentence 1 applying to sentence 2. They are not synonymous though they are the same word." 1.

Thus the first principle we must state is the need for what Ramsey calls "logical mapping" 2. as a preliminary to all doctrinal discussion. There must be an investigation of the nature of the literature to be studied. Ricoeur, focussing attention on the mode in which the message is presented, sums up the principle:

"The "confession of faith" which is expressed in the biblical documents is inseparable from the forms of discourse. ...The finished work which we call the Bible is a limited space for interpretation in which the theological significations are correlatives of forms of disclosure. It is no longer possible to interpret the significations without making the long detour through a structural explication of the forms." 3.

1. Skelton, op. cit., p.13.

2. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.173.

3. P. Ricoeur, "Philosophy and Religious Language," The Journal of Religion, 54 (Jan., 1974), pp.75, 78.

It is precisely because of that central role of language that error over its logic must lead to disaster. The correct set of rules must be applied to words. If, however, the interpreter does not know, as it were, which country he is in he cannot know which laws apply. To fix upon the laws of the wrong land can lead to serious distortion:

"From non-attention to these Figures, translators have made blunders as serious as they are foolish. Sometimes they have translated the figure literally, totally ignoring its existence; sometimes they have taken it fully into account, and have translated, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit; sometimes they have taken literal words and translated them figuratively." ¹.

The last category mentioned by Bullinger is one which has caused many a split among theologians. It is possible to have a description, like many in the gospels, which uses normal literal terms but where some take the meaning to be metaphorical. One example could be the view that far from describing a historically observable event, the resurrection narrative is a metaphorical account of the rise of new hope or life in the believer in Christ. The literal language is not necessarily to be taken at face value, but some other meaning considered. Thus Perry can advocate that, faced with an account of a miracle, we should first: "...find out whether the writer

1. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated, p.xvi.

intended us to take it literally...".¹ Being sure that the writer did have a metaphorical meaning in mind is, of course, of the greatest difficulty. To conclude he did, if he did not, will naturally lead to gross error.

This danger is paralleled if a metaphor is read descriptively. Ramsey examines this problem in connection with the language of the atonement:

"It was, I fear, only too easy to suppose that these words - justification, satisfaction, substitution, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, expiation - were not models at all, but described procedural transactions. It was supposed that they were words, describing and labelling (so to say) the machinery of the Atonement, each describing a species of atonement engineering."²

He goes on to explain how one such term, 'ransom', does not fit into the descriptive language of a transaction:

"Questions were asked such as: Whom were we ransomed from? What was paid as a ransom? Was the slave-owner satisfied? Nay more, did he overreach himself? And so on. Further, people whom we might suppose were both intelligent and devout gave serious attention to these questions, and professed to give some sort of answers to them."³

1. M.C. Perry, "Believing the Miracles and Preaching the Resurrection," The Miracles and the Resurrection (London: SPCK, 1964), p.71.

2. I.T. Ramsey, Christian Discourse (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.44.

3. Ibid., pp.51-2. Later Ramsey similarly studies Tertullian's development of the legal model in understanding the atonement. He concludes that it shows "how bogus inferences can be generated, and how a theologian can be articulate in a quite unbridled fashion. ...Not only, then, in Tertullian, is all the true significance and point of Christian (Contd.)

When metaphor is read descriptively the conclusions deserve scant respect. The end result can be so horrendous as to frighten away those who might otherwise have been attracted, had the matter been read more accurately, that is, more metaphorically. It is this sort of problem, according to Ramsey, which has led to many of religion's clashes with science. For example, when religion speaks of God 'up there', there is a clash:

"...because on scientific grounds we seem to make secure, reliable assertions about the size and features of the universe, and these leave no room for a divine location such as this way of construing assertions about God seems to demand. The difficulty which arises is an inconsistency, and for many - if not for all - it is theology and not science which is discarded. The abandoned discourse is found on the doorstep of the vicarage and not of the observatory. But now it is obvious that the difficulty arises and only arises because 'up there' has been given a wrong, descriptive allocation." 1.

That is the matter at its worst. But even where there is sympathy left for the subject matter, a failure to understand the logical complexity of the language can lead to totally avoidable theological word battles, as took place in the Arian controversy:

"So, how barren and verbal are those doctrinal controversies where each side supposes they are using straightforward homogeneous language, and

Contd.)

language lost, but Russell's menageries of metaphysical monsters is entertainment for a Sunday School picnic compared with the absurd hybrids and misformed giants which this kind of theologizing generates." Op. cit., pp.55-6.

1. Ramsey, Christian Discourse, pp.74-5.

talking in the material mode; whereas in point of fact they are only each sponsoring different models in order to understand, as best they can, a mystery which is bound to exceed both their attempts." 1.

Thus "logical mapping" must be done.

When, as in our case, we are interpreting literature belonging to a different age, there is a further complication. For then we must ensure that we have established the logical status of the language at the time of writing. A metaphor which was well and truly alive at the time of the writer may be dead in the day of the reader. Without caution a reader may then go astray in his interpretation. This is what Caird believes to have happened with some who deny a metaphorical meaning to the phrase 'the body of Christ'. He says they:

"...presumably took the word 'body' to mean 'the visible, organised form which an entity assumes'. They could then argue that, since the church is the outward, organic form of Christ's presence in the world, it is literally the body of Christ. What they failed to see is that the English word 'body', in this etiolated sense, is a dead metaphor, a victim of linguistic senescence which had not begun to overtake the Greek word soma in Paul's day, when the metaphor was still vivid and fresh." 2.

Without debating Caird's accuracy in what he says, his example does illustrate the need for careful appreciation of the status of language at the time it was

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.171. He discusses some of the issues in such early church "doctrinal controversies" in pp.159ff.

2. Caird, op. cit., p.191.

written.

The language before us may be either literal or metaphorical. If we place it wrongly, perhaps by never thinking to examine such a question, at the least we shall be led astray, and we may even be alienated from our subject matter, as Ramsey himself concludes:

"...logical misunderstandings may lead many people to suppose the phrases are sheer rubbish".¹ Although, as we said earlier, literal and metaphorical language may use the same words and at times the same grammar, they do not behave in the same way. So our first principle for the study of metaphor must be to ascertain what is the nature of the language which is before us.

When the conclusion is that we are dealing with metaphor, we then have to decide what we shall do with it. How are we to handle it?² Or, especially, how do we translate it?

Picking on that last question, we find ourselves facing a barrage of voices which tell us we cannot translate it at all. For example, Wilder says: "We should reckon with what we can learn about metaphorical and symbolic language from students of poetry: that it cannot really be translated, least of all into prose; that its meaning is to be thought in terms of its own

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.176.

2. This matter is dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

distinctive mode of communication...".¹ And TeSelle writes:

"One does not move easily from poetic forms to discursive discourse, for metaphor is not finally translatable or paraphrasable. No literary critic would attempt to translate or paraphrase the "content" of a Shakespearean sonnet: it could not be done and it would be a travesty if attempted. The critic who does not attempt to keep his or her method and language close to the sonnet, who does not attempt to bring others to the experience of the poem, may write an interesting book or article, but it will not have much to do with the sonnet." 2.

A further plea comes from Bridge, who also invokes the treatment of poetry as illustration:

"...the meaning (of a work of art) cannot be translated into terms other than those in which it is already expressed. You cannot write a prose essay to explain the meaning of Shakespeare's "Come away, come away death". You can only read the poem. The ineptitude of many concert programme 'blurbs' provides yet another example of the impossibility of translating an artistic statement into other terms." 3.

And Nowottny goes so far as to say that the main use-

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1. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric, p.133. He also says, in the context of not literalizing the plastic and mythological character of the New Testament: "We should not seek to reduce a painting to a blueprint, or to the canvas and pigments employed for it." Op. cit., p.132.
 2. TeSelle, Speaking in Parables, p.87. She also says metaphor and symbol should be treated as 'food for thought' - "not manipulated, translated, reduced, but contemplated, probed, reflected upon". Op. cit., p.40. Of metaphoric discourse she says: "...it invites contemplation, not extrapolation". Op. cit., p.99.
 3. Bridge, op. cit., p.21. Ramsey makes exactly the same point, again using poetry for illustration. See Religious Language, pp.135-6.



fulness of analytical criticism of poetry is that its failures serve to highlight the features of poems which refuse to be reduced to analytical terms. She goes on:

"The good analytical critic is not one who strips the layers off the onion one after another until there is nothing left inside; poetic language has the quality, paradoxical in non-poetic language, that when one layer of it is stripped off, the onion looks bigger and better than it did before - or, to speak more rationally, the process of examining its structure in critical terms sharpens the enquirer's appreciation of the power residing in poetic configurations of words." ¹.

Why should this be? Why is it so dangerous to take a metaphor and simply express it in literal language?

Black begins to give an answer to these questions:

"Suppose we try to state the cognitive content of an interaction-metaphor in "plain language." Up to a point, we may succeed in stating a number of the relevant relations between the two subjects. ...But the set of literal statements so obtained will not have the same power to inform and enlighten as the original. For one thing, the implications, previously left for a suitable reader to educe for himself, with a nice feeling for their relative priorities and degrees of importance, are now presented explicitly as though having equal weight. The literal paraphrase inevitably says too much - and with the wrong emphasis. One of the points I most wish to stress is that the loss in such cases is a loss in cognitive content; the relevant weakness of the literal paraphrase is not that it may be tiresomely prolix or boringly explicit (or deficient in qualities of style); it fails to be a translation because it fails to give the insight that the metaphor did." ².

It is Black's last few words which are the most important: "...because it fails to give the insight that the metaphor did". This is a claim to a uniqueness for

1. Nowottny, op. cit., p.19.

2. Black, Models and Metaphors, p.46.

metaphor. At first sight it would seem logical that a metaphor could be explained in other words, that it ought to be possible to spell out in literal language the meaning of a metaphor. It might take more words, even long words, but surely a metaphor could be put in simple, clear indisputable language? However, we are obliged to take account of two different kinds of metaphor.

This is a matter dealt with quite fully by Bevan. He begins by explaining one kind of symbol:

"There are visible objects or sounds which stand for something of which we already have direct knowledge. Such symbols are not intended to give us any information about the nature of the thing or things symbolized, but to remind us of them, or tell us something about their action at the particular moment, or prompt us to act in a certain way at the particular moment because of them." 1.

Examples given are the Union Jack which tells nothing about Britain or what it has done; a trumpet which heralds a king but gives no information about him or his activities; the death knoll of a bell which conveys nothing about what dying means; or the reveille trumpet, or the trumpet blast at the start of a march, which tells the troops nothing of getting up in the morning, or of marching, which they did not know already.

"...the sound tells them merely that the man they otherwise know is going to perform the action, or has suffered the experience, which they otherwise know, at that particular moment of

1. E. Bevan, Symbolism and Belief (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938), pp.11-12.

time...it tells them only that these actions, of which they have already definite ideas, acquired otherwise, have to be performed now." 1.

Then Bevan goes on to explain the second type of symbols:

"The other kind of symbols purport to give information about the things they symbolize, to convey knowledge of their nature, which those who see or hear the symbols have not had before or have not otherwise. There is the old story of someone born blind having explained to him what the colour scarlet was by his being told that it was like the sound of a trumpet. Whether that was a happy analogy or not, it is plain that the only possible way in which a person born blind could be given any information regarding colour is by the use of some things within his own experience, as symbols working by analogy." 2.

Later he uses the ideas of the 'love' or the 'will' of God as further examples of this second category of symbols. He says that when we speak of these, we know we are speaking of something different from any love or any will we can know in men. So, in that sense, the idea 'love of God', or 'will of God', may be regarded as an element in the life of man taken to symbolize something unimaginable in the life of God. He continues:

"We cannot see behind the symbol: we cannot have any discernment of the reality better and truer than the symbolical idea, and we cannot compare the symbol with the reality as it is more truly apprehended and see how they differ. The symbol is the nearest we can get to the Reality." 3.

If metaphor is used purely as a technique to illuminate a particular matter, or to stimulate feeling

1. Bevan, op. cit., p.12.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.257.

about it, then the metaphor will probably fall into the first of Bevan's categories. We already know and can speak of a particular subject and it is only to highlight it in some way that we use a metaphor. Obviously, then, the metaphor is not essential. We could dispense with it and still speak of the subject.

If, however, the subject is new, then the use of metaphor will be in order to speak at all of it. This is not now an optional extra, but the indispensable way of speaking. Given this second situation the metaphor is unavoidable, and no route around the metaphor to the 'reality' exists.

Bridge explains this in his own way:

"...for the sake of definition one can only say that a symbol is a thing descriptive of an event in which two 'things' come together as one. ...In other words, for the N.T. a symbol was not merely the sum of two old things, but rather one newly created thing. Indeed, the essence of the biblical symbols is precisely their internal unity, so that there are not 'two things' in them at all, but one united, indivisible, symbolic whole; and this is true of all genuine symbols." ¹.

He goes on to illustrate this from art. There it is obvious that a picture cannot be dissected into a transcendent part on the one hand, and the paint and canvas on the other. He points out that, in the canvas, there are not two 'things' which can be isolated, one material and the other immaterial. Rather there is one symbol, and the experience of the transcendent

1. Bridge, op. cit., p.134.

truth is to be had only in and through the canvas and paint, and in no other way. Should someone try to go behind the canvas and paint, in other words, he would find no picture there! Lampert supports this view, and draws an important conclusion:

"(The symbol) is not a form of comparison or substitution, but as it were the transcendent thing itself, inwardly turned towards that by which and in which it is outwardly expressed and symbolized, while it yet simultaneously maintains its transcendence. The criterion of the verity of a symbol, therefore, cannot be its comparison with the reality to which it points, for this reality is present only in the symbol and is ultimately inseparable from it." 1.

This reminds us of Richards' earlier statement that the co-presence of vehicle and tenor resulted in a meaning not attainable without their interaction. 2. That meaning, then, cannot be stated apart from the metaphor. It cannot be stated, that is to say, in non-metaphorical terms. Literal language is not capable of substituting for the metaphor because it cannot evoke the meaning in the way the metaphor can. 3.

1. E. Lampert, The Divine Realm (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1944), p.110.

2. See above, p.23.

3. TeSelle also has much to say on this subject which is similar to what these other authors have said. She concludes that "...the meaning is held in solution in the metaphor". Op. cit., p.49. Many writers highlight the particular difficulty when dealing with the divine, e.g., Farrer says: "...we suppose in general that the applicability of images is to be tested by looking away from the images to the things they symbolize. ...But in the case of supernatural divine revelation, nothing but the image is given us to act as an indication of the
(Contd.)

Perhaps we can illustrate this matter further. It is as if our intention were to examine the contents of a room. Ideally we should like to enter the room by a door and walk around inside carrying out our inspection. But if the room were to have no door, then all we could do is look through the window. This would be our only access to the contents of the room, our only view of them. There would be no alternative knowledge of the contents, no other mode of inspection. If we were very fortunate the room might have more than one window, in which case the different perspective gained would allow us a different view of the contents, and thus a better appreciation of them. Obviously, the more windows there were, the clearer would be our conclusions about the contents.

Thus it is with many aspects of reality and the metaphors which go with them. They are our only view of that reality. There is no other way to the meaning. Our only alternative to a particular metaphor, and even this only sometimes, is another metaphor.

This is why metaphors cannot be turned into literal

Contd.)

reality. We cannot appeal from the images to the reality, for by hypothesis we have not got the reality, except in the form of that which the images signify." The Glass of Vision, p.58; or Macquarrie says: "In order to prove that there is an encounter with a real Other, one would somehow need to get behind the experience, or find a second route to that which we know in the experience, and this is not possible." God-Talk, p.244.

language. It is not because to do so makes the subject boring, not because we lose 'feeling', but because (as Black said) we lose the insight. And we lose the insight because the metaphor is our indispensable and unique access to the subject. There are no doors but only windows. So our second principle is the untranslatability of metaphors.

Thirdly, because there is no access to the reality in view other than by a particular metaphor, then what that metaphor consists of is of the highest importance.

Wheelwright, using in one case Richards' terminology of vehicle and tenor (abbreviating them to V and T), traces three ways in which the relation between vehicle and tenor can be stabilized so that the vehicle functions as a symbol of one sort or another. The three ways are: by passive habituation, by stipulation, or by creative development. Habituation produces the 'common symbol':

"Its examples are numerous and various: anything that we habitually accept as a carrier of certain shared complexes of feeling and perhaps thought, which doubtless includes most of the words and phrases of our everyday speech, respectable and slang expressions alike. ...Such conventional remarks as "Nice day!" or "I swear to God," or "Oh, damn!" are evidently offshoots of what were formerly common symbols but have now become little more than linguistic reflexes called forth by certain types of situation." 1.

1. Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain - A Study in the Language of Symbolism, pp.11-12.

He then moves to the next category:

"Stipulation involves the strict employment of language as an instrument of wide communication and maximum stabilization of meaning. ... Collective living requires agreements and contracts, and these can operate only if the terms of them are identically understood and are kept unchanged. ... Imagine the plight of a geographer who, after comparing certain distances in miles, were to find himself wondering whether all the miles were of equal length!" 1.

Further examples of situations in which such rigid consistency in the use of the appropriate terms is necessary would include mathematics, the terms and relations of logic, the terms of legal documents and binding agreements, and in the various branches of science. Wheelwright says: "In all such cases we can speak of the stipulative symbol, or more briefly of the steno-symbol." 2.

To the third category can be given the name of organic symbol, expressive symbol, or depth symbol:

"Where this kind of living symbol is concerned the stability of the V - T relation is not just an accidental happening, nor again is it achieved and kept unvarying by fiat; it is developed and modulated by the creative and discriminating activity of man, in his human capacity as the being who can apprehend and express meanings through language. His materials are drawn from his experiences, from his imaginative expansions of experience, and from various kinds of psychic association, some of which may have erupted unaccountably from the depths of his unconscious. An important part of the artist's role is to develop such associative stimuli, through the

1. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.12.

2. Ibid.

medium of his craft, into freshly expressive and (if he is lucky) sharable symbols." 1.

Here, therefore, are three modes of symbol, or three ways in which some kind of symbol, or metaphor, 2. arises. The first category can fairly safely be left to one side, for we shall not be dealing with the "linguistic reflexes" of day to day speech. Even allowing for the rapid decay of the life of a metaphor, the New Testament metaphors would not be classified that way. But there are still two options left. We must insist that the third category, that of the depth symbol, is by far the most appropriate category into which to place the biblical metaphors.

Mascall says that no more than in the case of language is the image to be understood simply in terms of coding and decoding. There is, of course, he goes on, a use of images which is simply of this useful and pedestrian type, for example, the employment of a female figure with an anchor to stand for the theological virtue of hope. But:

"There is a whole armoury of images...whose evocation in the mind has direct epistemological efficacy. ...The image or the image-complex, like the word or the word-complex, is an objectum quo, by the entertainment and contemplation of which the mind is able to enter into intimate cognitive union with the reality of which it is a manifest-

1. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.13.

2. We should recall that we are using the word 'metaphor' in a fairly wide sense.

ation." 1.

Lampert is another who refers to the use of symbols as conventional signs, calling such instances (largely in mathematics and some scientific concepts) "mere conventions". 2. But he feels this to be an impoverished view of the symbol, a word which in its origin implies a 'meeting':

"The 'meeting' in a symbol is not mere coincidence and chance, but inner determination. The symbol is significant in the true sense of the word. All that we meet in it signifies and reaches out to a transcendent reality; and at the same time in so meeting us this reality becomes the way in which and that in which we perceive it in the very symbol. The conception of the symbol as implied in current phrases like: 'bare symbolism' or 'just a symbol' - a conception which suggests an exchangeable and arbitrary sign or metaphor rather than a symbol - must once and for all be discarded." 3.

The consequence of this is that great attention must be paid to the particular metaphor used. As Macquarrie points out, religious symbols are never just extrinsic or accidental. They are not arbitrary signs. Conventional signs, like the plus sign in arithmetic, could be changed by agreement. "But it would be unthinkable for Christianity to dispense with the cross or change it for some other symbol,

1. E.L. Mascall, Words and Images (A Study in Theological Discourse) (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957), p.112.

2. Lampert, op. cit., p.109.

3. Ibid.

just as presumably it would also be impossible to discard such fundamental analogies as that of the fatherhood of God." 1.

Wilder makes the same basic point when he asserts that the forms and modes of early Christian utterance are inseparable from the substance of the gospel: "How Jesus and his followers spoke and wrote could not be separated from what they communicated." 2.

What the metaphor is really makes a difference to our understanding of the reality in question. We could perhaps say that while the windows looking into the room are indeed all windows, they are nevertheless also all different in shape or type. They may be round, square, rectangular, large, small, nearly opaque, or crystal clear. They do not all afford the same view into the room, not just because they are located differently around the room, but because they shape the view differently.

Wheelwright says:

"If some Greek letter, not π , had originally been chosen to represent the ratio of circumference to diameter of a circle, the mathematical relations and laws would not have been altered a whit thereby; but if Shakespeare had decided to let the Weird Sisters inhabit water, like the Rhine Maidens, instead of "fog and filthie air," the whole play of Macbeth would have been profoundly different." 3.

1. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.201.

2. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric, p.126.

3. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.76.

Thus there must be at the very least "patterns of correspondence" ^{1.} between the metaphor and that of which it speaks. Where we have merely an arbitrary, agreed upon sign, no such correspondence need exist. As long as there is general recognition of the intended function or message of the sign, it will do its job well enough. But this is not so with an expressive, depth symbol. So Bevan says:

"The symbols of the first kind, which remind, or signal, or command need have no resemblance at all to the thing symbolized. ...Their connexion with the thing symbolized is either a matter of deliberate human arrangement, of convention, νόμος not φύσει in the Greek phrase, or has come about by a natural connexion in the natural events of our past experience which causes the presentation of certain objects to our senses now to call up a mass of other things which in the past we have experienced as accompanying or following the things we now see or hear or imagine. The connexion in either case is not one of similarity. ...But in the case of the second kind of symbols, those which purport to give information about the nature of something not otherwise known, resemblance is essential. The man born blind could not get any good from being told that scarlet was like the blowing of a trumpet unless there were a similitude of some kind between the two things - it may be the resemblance in the emotional reaction which each provokes." ^{2.}

Our third principle, then, is that the fact that a particular metaphor is used is important. That metaphor has not been chosen at random, but because the writer felt its 'shape' to be appropriate.

Although if pressed it would involve a certain

1. Dillistone, Christianity and Symbolism, p.25.

2. Bevan, op. cit., p.13.

amount of circular argumentation, this principle does in fact reinforce the previous one of the untranslatability of metaphors. If a metaphor gives a unique insight - a particularly shaped view - of something, then nothing else (hardly even another metaphor) can give that view. Other 'windows' give their views, but not the same one, either in perspective or shape. The metaphor in use then cannot be other than it is without changing also the meaning. This leads TeSelle to give an exclusive role to the metaphors of the Bible. Other metaphors can help us too:

"And yet, because form and content are inextricably linked, there will always be a certain priority to the biblical forms. These forms, these metaphors, were reached for in a time nearer to the event which marks the basis of Christianity and there is no way of preserving the "content" of these metaphors apart from the form." 1.

The content of any particular metaphor is of considerable importance, not to be discarded or diminished.

Our final principle has to do with the method of interpreting metaphor, and follows on logically from the other principles.

If metaphor is a basic aspect of language, is a respectable usage, cannot be turned into literal language but has a particular meaning of its own, then our mode of interpretation must be suited to our discourse. We must do more than assent to the fact that metaphors

1. TeSelle, op. cit., p.33.

have their place. Our whole method of inquiry must be adjusted in an appropriate way. If we attempt to study metaphor in a literal, conceptual manner, then we shall be guilty of attempting to 'put a square peg in a round hole'. But let us be clear that it is the hole which is the wrong shape and not the peg. And, if wrong, it must be changed, difficult though that may be for those who prefer to think only in conceptual terms.

Whitehead says succinctly: "Hard-headed men want facts and not symbols." ¹. And Macquarrie warns us of the danger of our own narrowness in our modes of interpretation. We look for data-type facts and the peculiar nature of myth or metaphor is hard to accept: "For the modern mind, this evocative character has become a major barrier in the way of understanding or appreciating myth." ². Wheelwright supports this:

"Our contemporary vision tends to be limited and prejudiced by certain prevalent habits of interpretation and expectancy. ...An age of technos-ophy - an age, that is to say, in which our ways of interpreting and appraising experience tend to be influenced more and more by the streamlined methods and glittering results of technology - encourages us to think in certain ways and inhibits us or dissuades us from thinking in other ways." ³.

It is these words such as "limited", "prejudiced", "inhibits", and "dissuades" which must be our warning

1. Whitehead, Symbolism, its Meaning and Effect, p.71.

2. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.173.

3. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.4.

signals. A mind used to thinking conceptually does not easily change to cope with the metaphorical nature of the language before it. The point is: it is one thing to 'logically map' the literature correctly and admit that it is metaphorical - it is then quite another to interpret it fairly according to its own rules, and not according to those applicable to literal language.

Farrer also speaks of this danger. Were we to wish to study the Trinity, he says, we could do it in the old scholastic way, of hunting for propositions which declare or imply the doctrine in its philosophical form. Alternatively, there is the new scholastic way, what he calls the method of the research degree, of counting and classifying various texts. He says this method, since it starts from statistics and lexicography, exercises the fascination of those techniques over our minds. However, he goes on, it is false in its assumptions and inconclusive in its results:

"It is false in its assumptions, because it supposes that St. Paul or St. John is, after all, a systematic theologian. A very unsystematic theologian, no doubt, too impulsive and enthusiastic to put his material in proper order or to standardize his terminology. Still, what of that? Anyone who has a decent modern education can do it for him: we, for example, will be rewarded a research degree for doing it. We will draw into the light the system which was coming to birth in the Apostle's mind. But suppose there was no system coming to birth in the Apostle's mind at all - not, that is, on the conceptual level? Suppose that his thought centred round a number of vital images, which lived with the life of images, not of concepts. Then each image will have its own conceptual conventions, proper to the figure it embodies: and a single over-all conceptual analysis will be about as useful for the interpretation

of the Apostle's writings as a bulldozer for the cultivation of a miniature landscape-garden." 1.

The special value of Farrer's statement is that, while it issues the warning clearly, it does not rob us of all hope of understanding. He points out that each image does have its own conventions by which we may conceive of the meaning. All searching for meaning is not prohibited. As Wilder says, while our congenital modern demand that metaphorical language be rationalized must be resisted, this does not end the story: "Historical and critical study of the material is by no means ruled out, and will only clarify its meaning, granted that it is studied with recognition of its true character." 2. And Black, after critical remarks on any attempt to restate a metaphor in 'plain language', nevertheless goes on to say:

"But 'explication,' or elaboration of the metaphor's grounds, if not regarded as an adequate cognitive substitute for the original, may be extremely valuable. A powerful metaphor will no more be harmed by such probing than a musical masterpiece by analysis of its harmonic and melodic structure." 3.

Thus our final principle is that our minds must

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1. Farrer, op. cit., p.45. He goes on to accept that the various images are not unconnected in the apostle's mind, but says such connections happen according to their own imagery laws, and not according to the principles of conceptual system.
 2. Wilder, op. cit., p.135.
 3. Black, Models and Metaphors, p.46.

adjust, for the purposes of interpretation, to the metaphorical material before us, guarding against any interpretation which forces the material into a mould more suited to our preferred mental bent. We would do well in fact, in our study of metaphor, to transfer to it, with appropriate adjustment, the advice of Lévy-Bruhl at the beginning of his work on "Primitive Mentality":

"Let us...rid our minds of all preconceived ideas in entering upon an objective study of primitive mentality, in the way in which it manifests itself in the institutions of uncivilised races or in the collective ideas from which these institutions are derived. Then we shall no longer define the mental activity of primitives beforehand as a rudimentary form of our own, and consider it childish and almost pathological. On the contrary, it will appear to be normal under the conditions in which it is employed, to be both complex and developed in its own way. By ceasing to connect it with a type which is not its own, and trying to determine its functioning solely according to the manifestations peculiar to it, we may hope that our description and analysis of it will not misrepresent its nature." 1.

So we have found four principles which, following our assessment of the importance of metaphor, are fundamental for any biblical study:

1. The need for "logical mapping" - a process of determining the character of the literature, asking

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1. L. Lévy-Bruhl, Primitive Mentality, trans., L.A. Clare (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923), pp.32-3. According to TeSelle, if such a mode of enquiry were undertaken in theology then the character of the 'tradition' of the church, and of theological training, would need to change appropriately. See TeSelle, op. cit., pp.82, 93, 105, 177.

whether we are dealing with literal or metaphorical language.

2. The need not to attempt to translate metaphors into literal language, this largely being because they are our only access to the reality of which they speak.

3. The need for close attention to be paid to the metaphor being used, it not being an arbitrary sign, but a symbol which does by some means carry information about the subject in question, and shape our view of it.

4. The need for careful guard to be kept on 20th century, analytically orientated, minds to ensure that the language of metaphor gets a fair airing on its own principles.

CHAPTER III

RULES FOR THE STUDY OF METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

There can hardly be a sport with no rules at all. Some have many, others few. But all at least have some guidelines as to the objectives, mode of play, methods of scoring, descriptions of infringements, etc.

Language is in this respect no different from sport. When writers use models and metaphors there are goals to be attained, rules to be observed, and penalties to be paid by those who fail to use the principles of the language properly. Ramsey says that articulation using models is no free-for-all, but that "...it develops under checks and balances".¹

Having already established some basic principles, we now need to lay out some of these 'rules of the game', these characteristics of metaphorical language. Without doing so we could not properly understand the material before us in the New Testament. We would completely fail to perceive the subtler points in the language, and could be guilty of gross errors in interpretation. As we have already noticed, some of the unfavourable attitudes which have been taken in the past about metaphorical language have arisen because

1. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p.127. Ramsey, more than any other writer, covers this whole topic of the rules of metaphoric language. Constant reference, therefore, will be made throughout this chapter to his different books.

of a failure to understand the nature of that language. It is as if a spectator of a football match wrote the whole game off as nonsensical, because ten men on each team kicked the ball, but one on each side picked it up. 'This is silly', says our spectator, and goes off to watch rugby instead, where at least all 15 in each team do the same things with the ball. Even a small acquaintance with the rules of football would have told our spectator that what he thought an inconsistency was precisely permitted and a vital part of that sport. Had he known that, the spectator might have remained and learned to enjoy the game.

Thus it is that with some appreciation of the rules of metaphorical language we shall shortly be all the better equipped to face our text. Then we shall perceive what is taking place in the language, and be slow to 'write it off'.

However, before proceeding, we need to take account of two further preliminary matters:

1. We do not need to know all the rules. It might be very satisfying to set down and thus become acquainted with every last regulation regarding the working of metaphorical language, but in our situation it would, if done, take up a disproportionate amount of space, and, in any case, is not necessary. This latter reason is because we know already what our texts say, and, therefore, to a large extent can tell in advance which regulations are relevant.

It is as if a football match has already been played and, say, videotaped for later viewing. A class of people who know nothing of the game are about to view this videotaped match. The teacher, of course, already knows what happens in the match and so tries to explain the necessary rules to his pupils. Now, he will need to explain the rules about scoring, fouling, corners, throw-ins, substitutes, handling, etc., for these are basic. But he does not need to explain what the procedure is if the cross-bar falls off, knocking out one of the goalkeepers. Neither will he explain what happens should the player kick the ball so hard that it bursts. Nor will he cover the possibility of a ground subsidence swallowing up one of the teams. All these matters are covered, directly or indirectly, in the rules of football. Yet the teacher does not tell them to his class for an obvious reason. He does not cover them because he knows these eventualities do not occur in this match. The teacher has seen the film. He knows what takes place. So he lays before his pupils on this occasion only the rules appropriate to this game.

Similarly we are about to study the metaphors used in relation to baptism in the Pauline literature. The texts have already been written. We do not need to study every single rule of metaphorical language, but only a few basics, plus those relevant to our task. Therefore no overall, all-encompassing study of the

workings of metaphorical language is either intended or needed.

2. Because we may find certain rules of metaphorical language being used in the New Testament, this does not inevitably mean that the language was consciously constructed in this way. We spoke of this briefly before ¹. but it deserves further mention lest anyone be sceptical about the role of metaphorical language in biblical material simply because they cannot imagine a writer 'thinking up' a vast array of metaphors.

The football player who has the ball carefully at his feet, glances up to see a defender sliding in to tackle, and quickly flicks an inch-perfect pass to a team-mate, is acting within the rules of the game but not because of them in any conscious way. During the heat of the match he does not think: "Regulation four allows me to kick the ball. ...Regulation nine allows this defender to tackle me. ...Therefore I shall use Regulation seven and pass the ball". No, at the moment of playing he acts according to his footballing nature and plays the game basically within the rules.

And what is true of the footballer is, in this case, generally true of the writer. Caird says: "It is well known that a person speaking his mother tongue is normally unconscious of grammar. Speech is for the most part a spontaneous and unselfconscious act...". ².

1. See above, pp.37f.

2. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.184.

Likewise, Ramsey says poets do not work explicitly according to a formal pattern in writing a poem. Neither does a carpet salesman calculating the size of carpet required for a room consciously go step by step through every detail of the mathematical system he is using - he does it almost by instinct. Ramsey continues:

"No-one would suggest that to do arithmetic everyone must consciously move according to the pattern of a recognized axiomatic system; but if and when we come across difficulties of an intractable kind, such difficulties demand that we look into the logical pattern which our arithmetical behaviour has in fact had, though we have never hitherto explicitly recognized it. The same is true of the Bible. Those who wrote the books must (if I am right) and simply because they were inspired, have written in a manner which in fact is logically odd. But this does not mean that self-consciously, and deliberately, they constructed their phrases to certain logical patterns." 1.

Therefore, as we go through the following points we must beware of imagining Paul (or any other New Testament writer) sitting with his epistle on the one side, and his book of 'Rules of metaphorical language' on the other, and glancing anxiously from one to the other as he wrote. As the footballer slips a pass instinctively, yet within rules which we can study, so Paul wrote instinctively, yet also within a definite pattern of language, following certain rules of metaphorical language.

To begin, we must say that metaphorical language

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, pp.92-3.

is a language for the initiated. Because this type of language is one of disclosure, picture, analogy, etc., then the language can only succeed for those able to 'see'. Wheelwright says: "Behind every semantic situation there lies the question of "for whom"."¹ As he goes on to explain, this is the question of the 'fit interpreter'. At a very basic level the problem arises with all language. To speak of a 'dog' is only meaningful to a person with two qualifications:

(a) To be familiar by some means with that species of animal.

(b) To have learned that the English word 'dog' commonly stands for a member of that species.

A person lacking these qualifications cannot usefully participate in language which includes a 'dog' reference. The word carries no meaning as he has not previously learned the meaning.

And what is true at such a simple level is equally true with a more complex language form. Metaphor, as we know, has to do with making connections. Only a fit interpreter, that is, one who has been taught, is capable of making the right connection.

Wittgenstein gives a by now famous illustration of this. Using the picture 'God's eye sees everything', he points out that theists who use this picture would

1. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.8.

be happy to discuss the question of whether God is able to see the future as well as the present. That would be a question appropriate to the picture. However, these theists would object if, using the same picture, someone were to ask about the shape or shagginess of God's eyebrows. That, somehow, would be a wrong use of the picture. Hudson, quoting Wittgenstein's illustration, then adds: "So, learning to be a religious believer is being trained in how to use the picture." ^{1.}

Gale mentions a Pauline passage with which the totally untrained interpreter could come to a remarkable conclusion. The passage is Gal.3 where Paul uses the idea of a will or covenant. Gale says:

"One characteristic of a will is the fact that it takes effect only upon the death of its maker. Since, in v.17, it is explicitly stated that the diathēkē was ratified by God, to apply this fact from the analogy would require the idea of the death of God, an idea that deserves no comment." ^{2.}

But it is only by education that the reader can know not to apply that detail also.

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1. Hudson, "Some remarks on Wittgenstein's account of religious belief," Talk of God, p.37. Speaking of myth, H. and H.A. Frankfort make a similar point: "It claims recognition by the faithful, it does not pretend to justification before the critical." The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, p.7.
 2. Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul, p.46. At the end of his studies of Paul's pictures, Gale concludes that generally only a single element from a picture serves to illustrate or reinforce the particular idea involved in any context. Op. cit., p.223.

Of course, the processes of selecting the right point of comparison become unconscious. When we find Burns comparing his love to a red, red rose, we do not set down all the characteristics of a rose (beauty, thorniness, seasonal, pleasant fragrance, etc.), and then ponder which apply. Without thinking in any such formal way we understand enough of the nature of the comparison. But that does not negate the fact that we have been, albeit subtly, taught how to react to such a comparison.

Caird speaks of metaphors with a low degree of correspondence, that is, a low degree of likeness between the things compared, and those with a high degree of correspondence.¹ Where there is a high degree of correspondence, less training will be required for an interpreter to make the right connection, and the converse will apply in a situation where there is a low degree of correspondence.

Understanding, then, of symbols - of how they work, to what they point, of their limitations - is for the initiated. The person lacking initiation will be unable to interpret the picture correctly.

There is a corollary from this. If it is the case that only trained interpreters are able to make sense of any given symbol, then anyone setting down a symbol for a given set of interpreters ought only to use

1. See Caird, op. cit., pp.153-4.

symbols he knows they will understand. At a basic level again, if we were wishing to speak of a dog to a particular group of people and knew them to be French, then we would not use the word 'dog' but rather 'chien', presuming that to be a much more easily understood term for them. And the same principle applies in the biblical writings. The authors wished themselves to be understood. Therefore, we may reasonably assume that the symbols they chose were ones they considered would communicate with those to whom they addressed themselves. Macquarrie says that one of the necessary foundations for the successful use of symbols is "...a background of shared ideas within which the symbols can operate".¹ The particular advantage of this fact is that it can provide a 'back door' entrance into an understanding of the intended meaning of a particular author, as Caird points out: "...any speaker who wishes to be intelligible will take account of the capacity of his audience, so that our judgment about what they are likely to have made of his words provides one possible clue to his intention."²

Now, this is not to say that the writer and his readers are already both familiar with the same symbols as symbols. The whole point of a successful symbol is that it takes the familiar and uses it to reveal

1. Macquarrie, God-Talk, p.201.

2. Caird, *op. cit.*, p.40.

something new. Therefore, what we are saying is that both parties have the same basic material, the same basic words, but the writer employs that material in such a way as to reveal something new to the readers. But only by having some prior knowledge of at least the common use of the words do the readers have any hope of understanding the unusual use to which they are being put in a metaphor. The fit interpreter is the one already initiated. The fit writer is the one using terms which it is reasonable for him to presume his readers will interpret correctly.

As we approach texts on baptism, therefore, we may reasonably suppose that the metaphors used are such as may be understood by the readership (that is, unless we were to consider Paul an irresponsible, unfit, writer). Something familiar to them is what we may expect that Paul will have chosen, albeit possibly casting it in a new light to bring forth a new meaning. There would be no point in writing about baptism in terms which the readers could not hope to understand. ¹.

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1. This aspect of metaphorical language, the need to use familiar terms, would be of particular significance for a study of the origins of metaphors about baptism. That is not a task we shall undertake. It is a secondary task compared to ours. However, what we do is very relevant to it. Because of this fact that a responsible writer will choose his metaphors carefully, the more precisely we determine what those metaphors are the more able others will be to perceive their origins. Knowing what a metaphor is, is an essential prerequisite

(Contd.)

Moving on slightly from the basic concept of the 'fit interpreter', we find it a rule that while some models 'work' for one person they will not for another.

Ramsey says:

"Whether the light breaks or not is something that we ourselves cannot entirely control. We can certainly choose what seems to us the most appropriate models, we can operate what seem to us the best stories, but we can never guarantee that for a particular person the light will dawn at a particular point, or for that matter at any point in any story." 1.

Obviously, if a successful metaphor involves some kind of stretching of meaning, until by a particular use of the old the new breaks in, then we are talking about a question of insight. And insights, as Ramsey says, cannot be guaranteed. Also, they are liable to distortion as they are interpreted. People do not bring empty minds to these pictures, and their pre-understanding is of considerable importance in the process of interpretation.

Dealing with analogy, Macquarrie explains this matter:

"It is true that in some cases the analogue might be less than self-interpreting. There is the case of the child who has never known parental love, and for whom the analogue of God's fatherhood needs to be unfolded through the experience of love in a Christian community; again, human

Contd.)

to considering where that language may have come from, and what background factors might have influenced that choice of words and image.

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.79.

fatherhood is frequently so cheapened and debased that it may afford only a very distant glimpse of what is meant by divine fatherhood, and needs to be itself judged in the light of the God - creature relation, to which it has afforded a clue; or again, one would need to take account of Freud's theories about the projection of the father-image, and ensure that this particular analogue is not allowed to degenerate into something infantile and neurotic." 1.

Nowottny also speaks of the care a writer must exercise in choosing a metaphor: "For example, if he wanted to find a model of grace and flexibility and silent movement he might reject some objects which do have these qualities, simply because the objects have powerful repulsive associations for most people, as the snake has." 2.

So some models are more helpful than others, perhaps because they are plainer or perhaps because the terms they employ are less liable to stimulate interpretative distortion.

Two things flow from this for our study. If some models will work for some people, others for other people, then we shall need to be on the lookout for a multiplicity of models. Where one model does not work, or only partially works, another one will give

1. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.197.

2. Nowottny, The Language Poets Use, p.64. TeSelle also points out how much emotion can be involved in certain metaphors, influencing our interpretation consequently, e.g., the feelings involved when policemen are called "pigs". See TeSelle, Speaking in Parables, p.44.

the picture to a particular reader. And the cumulative effect of many models will heighten the sense of importance of what is being talked about.¹ Given this, we must not therefore rashly assume that different models are necessarily saying completely different things. Rather, they may well be complementary.

Also, since there is the danger of distorting interpretation, we may once again suppose that writers such as Paul would take reasonable steps to guard against this. This would be necessary especially in metaphors with a low degree of correspondence, for the less obvious that a point of comparison is, the more precautions which are needed to guide the interpretation. So safeguards would be built in to the language in some way - perhaps by a cautious choice of words, perhaps some guarding phrase surrounding the metaphor, or some other check which we shall mention shortly. Alternatively, of course, it could be said that certain interpretations other than the norm might well be what the writer would expect the readers to make because of their background of ideas, and in his writing he would accommodate himself to that situation.

Another characteristic of metaphorical language is now becoming clear - that it is a language lacking precision of the sort to which we are accustomed. When

1. See Ramsey's comments on these lines regarding the New Testament language about the Holy Spirit.
 I.T. Ramsey, Models for Divine Activity (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1973), p.42.

we are dealing with disclosures and moments of insight these are grasped individually, and the whole matter lacks a universality of interpretation. This is not to say again that some metaphors cannot be understood by everyone. It is to say that they may not be understood in the same way by everyone.

Abstract art provides an example of this. To one person a picture may convey light, brightness, hope; to another wildness, unpredictability, fear. Here are two different understandings, but one picture.

Wheelwright says there can be a conflict between two aims, one of designating clearly and precisely, the other of expressing with significant fullness:

"The question of precedence will be answered differently, no doubt, according to the nature and dominant purpose of the occasion. And so far as we set primary importance upon wide-scale communicability or upon associative depth and fullness, we tend to engage in one or other of two basic types of semantic strategy: to employ steno-language (the language of plain sense as it becomes logical) or to employ depth language, which is to say expressive language (the language of poetic imagination)." 1.

Macquarrie points out similarly that in some modes of discourse the denotation of names is of primary importance. One example would be scientific language where a name must refer as precisely as possible to some referend in the observable world (e.g., water = H₂O). But in other fields of discourse - for example, in theology, history, and poetry - it is the existential

1. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.15.

or intuitive connotations of words which are of great importance for the understanding of the discourse. ¹.

Our problem is that, since theological language is the language more of connotation than denotation, we simply do not have Wheelwright's choice of two ways of speaking before us. A 'photographic' picture - one therefore having denotative precision - is not available to us. We just are not talking of matters that can be pinned down:

"What we have and all that we have is the grid or screen provided by this metaphor and by that metaphor. The metaphor is the thing, or at least the only access that we highly relative and limited beings have to it. ...That such a situation leaves us feeling uneasy is an understatement. We grasp after certainty, after direct access to the way things "really are"." ².

Metaphorical language must be a language of humility. It claims to provide insight, and indeed to do so in situations where literal language cannot work. That is a lofty claim. But the price to be paid is a tentativeness in interpretation, a recognition that the metaphor gives a glimpse but does not provide a blueprint. Ramsey says:

"It is a built-in hazard of disclosures, as contrasted with the 'facts' provided by scientific reporting, that they give rise to no self-guaranteed assertions. So we have not to be afraid to admit on occasion that we have been wrong in sponsoring some particular way of talking or acting, which hitherto we had supposed expressed adequately the

1. See Macquarrie, op. cit., p.94.

2. TeSelle, op. cit., p.29.

insight which matched the disclosure. ...So all our precepts and all our pictures and all our attempts to talk of what a disclosure discloses will be no more than approximations." 1.

But it is one thing to be humble, and another to sound worthless. Let no-one think metaphor unnecessary. Ramsey says the tentativeness of interpretations based on metaphor does not mean that anybody's guess is as good as anyone else's, or that theological mapping does not matter at all: "Because no one has a map which is at all points a perfect fit, a descriptive replica, it does not mean that any map is as good as any other, still less that maps do not matter at all." 2. TeSelle well points out that the only alternative may be silence, 3. and Wheelwright that some subjects are never meant to be grasped with any precision - as in Shakespeare's play the character of Hamlet is always meant to be ambivalent, unlike the definite character of Polonius. 4.

1. Ramsey, Christian Discourse, pp.25-26. Dillenberger, speaking of language about God, says something we may adapt for our own case: "The price to be paid for the knowledge of God is an analogical concreteness which is always the truth but never the whole truth." J. Dillenberger, "On Broadening the New Hermeneutic," The New Hermeneutic, eds. J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp.157-8.

2. Ramsey, Christian Discourse, p.26.

3. TeSelle, op. cit., p.28.

4. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.88.

Indeed, even allowing for the truth of what Wheelwright has just said, we can be still more positive, for metaphorical language has a precision, albeit of its own kind. If, again, we use the illustration of abstract art we can see this matter clearly. Let us suppose the artist wishes to paint a picture which will convey to those who see it a message of 'joy'. Now, 'joy' itself cannot be painted. The artist cannot set 'joy' up in a studio and copy its outlines on to canvas. A literal rendering in paint is obviously impossible. Therefore, the artist can only work his colours, his strokes, his texture together in some abstract way to bring forth a 'joyous' image. Perhaps he uses bright colours: reds, yellows, oranges. Perhaps he paints with vigour, using long, sweeping, brush strokes. Or, perhaps he paints a happy face, seeking thus to convey the message of 'joy'. Whatever method he chooses there is no way he can have a replica, as we have said, of 'joy'. But he may well have produced an image which conveys that message. The artist has done the only thing he can. There is no guarantee that an observer will get the message. There is no precision about the painting equivalent to the precision of a scientific formula. But, after all, no scientific formula can convey 'joy', and within the framework of its own medium, the artistic work has done that. To whatever extent the painting has succeeded in conveying the message of 'joy', to that extent it has had its

own precision.

However, it is also fair to say that the artist may make either a good or a bad job of his task. It is possible that he could choose inappropriate colours, make unhelpful brush strokes, be unable to paint a happy face, and so on. Some art obviously conveys its message better than others. And this leads us to a thorny problem for metaphor. How do we decide which images are good or bad? Or, worse, how do we decide which are true or false?

Certainly, as Bridge says, these questions are far from being simple: "The arts give warning that a search for a rule of thumb, by which to evaluate the images, is likely to be as chimerical and as dangerous as a search for a fixed criterion of infallible appreciation and judgement in the arts." ¹.

In fact we must realise that we have two problems and not one. The first we have touched on already, and that is the matter of the 'fit interpreter'. It seems obvious that the uncultured eye will not appreciate at least a great deal of art in the way the trained eye can. Yet even training may not be enough.

1. Bridge, Images of God, an Essay on the Life and Death of Symbols, p.147. Richards says the same about poetry: "The theory of badness in poetry has never received the study which it deserves, partly on account of its difficulty." I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1926), p.199.

A person might be taught all the finer points of composition, all the established rules of art technique, but that does not enable him to appreciate the beauty of the work before him. There is a dimension to a painting which goes beyond any 'rule-book', just as an intimate knowledge of anatomy, including how the larynx vibrates, is of little use when it comes to understanding the meaning of a speaker. Thus, as TeSelle says, the ability to discriminate and recognise appropriate metaphors is complex:

"It appears to be, at least in part, an intrinsic quality, like the ability to judge a work of art as 'good'. ...But in learning to discriminate among religious metaphors, participation in the religious community seems essential, for in part, at least, what the "tradition" and "orthodoxy" are is the recognition by many believers over many centuries of metaphors that fit and are appropriate. On this reading "heresy" can be seen as constituted by discarded metaphors which were tried by the church and found to be inappropriate." 1.

Macquarrie would support this need of participation in the religious community as a qualification for rightly interpreting metaphors. He takes the example of an individual's mystical experience and asks who makes the best interpreter of that. Is it someone who is basically sympathetic (and therefore accepts that the mystic is having commerce with a transhuman reality)? Or is the better interpreter someone who is sceptical (as perhaps a psychologist would be found to be)? Macquarrie suggests a right interpretation is

1. TeSelle, op. cit., fn., p.51.

one which captures most of the meaning, and adds: "If so, a good interpretation would demand at least some affinity of interest and some appropriateness in the language of the interpreter." ¹.

It would seem, then, that only those willing to perceive a disclosure can rightly interpret that which is before them. Because of the particular nature of metaphorical language, a basic sympathy with its mode of expression appears to be necessary for there to be proper communication. (That is not to say there must be agreement on the content of the metaphorical expression. The interpreter may not agree with that at all.) To give a metaphor a 'fair hearing' requires a fundamental accord with this type of language. It might even be said that the best interpreter is the one most able to make the mental adjustment we spoke of earlier, the one who can think metaphorically rather than analytically. ². Such an interpreter is in a position to distinguish the good from the bad amongst metaphors.

Yet that is not all which can be said, because there is the second area still to be examined on this question of discriminating between metaphors, and that is the problem of the metaphors themselves. It is perfectly feasible to imagine two individuals

1. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.151.

2. See above, pp.64ff.

attempting to speak on the same subject but employing different and even contradictory metaphors. What do we do in this situation?

Ramsey gives two answers: "...we shall reasonably prefer that discourse which (a) formally is the most simple, coherent, comprehensive and consistent; (b) materially establishes the best empirical fit...".¹ These two answers require some explanation. We shall take the second first.

Language must make reasonable sense in the world in which men find themselves. To call God 'Father' only makes sense (only 'works' as a model) if the relationship of fathers to children in this world exists and could provide some reasonable pattern of correspondence to the relationship of God to men. This is empirical fit. Thus Ramsey says:

"The model of love will certainly have to meet the challenge of evil and suffering in the universe and in this way to grapple with the 'problem of evil'; but even more importantly there will have to be specific situations which can be legitimately 'interpreted by love' if the model of love has any initial justification at all. There must be a pattern of empirical circumstances which fit 'loving' discourse when used of God."²

So here we do have one mode of judging models. We may test whether what they tell ties in with the rest of our understanding of the world. Should there be no 'fit' at all then that model may either be spurious

1. Ramsey, Models for Divine Activity, p.62.

2. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p.133.

or misunderstood.

The other category Ramsey mentioned was that a good model should be simple, and have coherence, comprehensiveness, and consistency. Simplicity, coherence, and consistency are obvious marks of quality in any form of language. But what is meant by comprehensiveness? Ramsey explains that a model must justify itself alongside other models. No model should be treated exclusively but at all times with an eye on other models: "...at various points these other models will supply stop cards to inhibit further discourse in that particular direction".¹ So at all times a model is viewed in the light of what the other models are saying. The model in question is, as it were, constantly being put to the test by the others.

The consequences of failing to put a 'stop' to a particular line of discourse, allowing one model to continue unchecked, are not difficult to imagine. Griffiths writes:

"...it could be argued that, if the church is a bride who reaches her fullest beauty on the day of her wedding with the Lamb, subsequently she will grow old and grey and lose her beauty. Obviously this would be foolishly pressing the illustration too far." 2.

Partly the control of a metaphor is done by the training of the interpreter, as we have seen, and partly, then,

1. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p.133.

2. M. Griffiths, Cinderella with amnesia (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p.53.

by this fencing in of the meaning by the other models in a passage.

Ramsey goes on:

"Now, the more a model can exist successfully in competition with other models, the more justifiably does it provide discourse about what the cosmic disclosure discloses. One model, for example, Protector, is better than another, for example, Laundress, if its discourse is more widely ranging. A model like person is better than, say, shepherd or potter because it can say all that these other models can say and more besides; in this way it can absorb the discourse from two or more models. Summarizing we might say that this...set of criteria which enables us to express preferences between models is explicitly related to their relative dominance in the discourse." 1.

Now, what we have here are two related criteria. First, there is this "jostling of models" 2. as Ramsey calls it. Every expression needs to be contextualized in a multi-model discourse. "So the first caution to be observed in talking about God is: use as many models as possible, and from these develop the most consistent discourse possible. Never suppose the supply of models has been exhausted." 3.

This advice is supported by others such as TeSelle and Macquarrie. TeSelle sees this jostling of language as particularly necessary because of the imprecision of metaphors:

"The risk and open-endedness means that many metaphors are necessary, metaphors which will support, balance, and illuminate each other.

1. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p.133.

2. Ibid., p.72.

3. Ibid., p.128.

Thus, if one calls God father, presumably one could also use the metaphors sister, brother, or mother though not jailer, sorcerer, or murderer. The associated commonplaces of the first three fit together, but they do not fit with the conventional wisdom attached to the latter set of metaphors." 1.

And Macquarrie considers this to be the reason why, for example, the New Testament gives so many titles to the person of Christ:

"Whatever symbol or analogue is affirmed must be at the same time denied, or, better still, whenever one symbol is affirmed, others that will modify and correct it must be affirmed at the same time. Thus the New Testament, in trying to explicate the person of Christ, applied to him a number of images - 'Son of man', 'Son of God', 'Messiah', 'Lord', 'Word'. It is impossible to 'harmonize' all these ideas, but out of agreements and conflicts something of the mystery of the incarnation finds expression." 2.

This is another way of describing the benefit of having several windows instead of just one into a room. A solitary window gives a limited and possibly misleading perspective. For example, from one view the room might appear empty. But given a window on the other wall we can see an occupant in the room who was out of the field of vision of the first window. Thus the second corrects the first (not that the first view was wrong, just limited), and, as said before, it is obvious that the more windows there are, the clearer and more comprehensive the view we have. So, to a great extent, the more windows there are, the more

1. TeSelle, op. cit., pp.44-5.

2. Macquarrie, op. cit., p.228.

confidently we can speak of the contents of the room. This is, then, the point the writers are making about metaphors. Many metaphors are needed so that we do not follow any one and run it to death. Other metaphors guide us concerning when to halt our use of a particular metaphor. And, the more we have, the more reliably we may speak of whatever it is to which the metaphors point. In our study, then, when we find more than one metaphor relevant to a context, then each must be allowed to speak its message. Correction, modification of one metaphor by others is necessary until a clear picture emerges. (This certainly does not permit the gathering together of examples of what appear to be the same model from different contexts for purposes of modification. We have already found that the use of the word 'blood' could not readily be compared from one context to another, and we shall shortly come to further reasons why this has dangers.^{1.})

There is just one exception to this process, and this involves the other criterion. We found Ramsey saying that some models were better than others, for example, Protector was better than Laundress. The former was more dominant in the discourse than the latter. He explains this more fully:

"To speak, as we have done, of a profusion of models raises the question as to whether models

1. See below, pp.104f.

can be graded, and whether we might speak of one model including another, when (say) the associated discourse of the one included all that of the other and more besides. In this kind of way we might reach the concept of a dominant model. One model is more dominant than another when it presides over the greater language spread; when it enables us to be reliably articulate over a greater range of discourse." 1.

Thus, for Ramsey: "The most dominant model provides the best articulation". 2.

This is an umbrella concept of metaphor - that one metaphor presides over the lesser examples, saying all that they do. One example given by Ramsey of such a "super model" 3. is 'love'. It fits with both the suffering servant of Is.53 and the doctrine of the Remnant, with the self-sacrifice of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and with the theme of a life given as a ransom to procure an advantage for others. 4. So:

"...love could provide us with a dominant model in so far as it licensed discourse about the Atonement whose assertions incorporated all that was worth while in what other models wished to say, and led to the most reasonable doctrine of the Atonement since it led to minimal clashes with other discourse." 5.

What is being said is that there may be numerous

1. Ramsey, Christian Discourse, p.20.

2. Ibid., p.22.

3. Ramsey, Christian Empiricism, p.71. Ramsey does not hyphenate the expression, but it would seem more appropriate to do so, and therefore we do in the text which follows.

4. See Ramsey, Christian Discourse, pp.57-8.

5. Ibid., pp.61-2.

'small' metaphors, metaphors with a fair degree of particularity. For that reason, while they may give a useful insight, they are limited to that one insight. They quickly clash with other metaphors. Above them are more general, all-encompassing metaphors. They say all that their smaller metaphors say but with less particularity and therefore with fewer conflicts.

TeSelle illustrates this occurrence in poetry. She reprints Herbert's poem 'The Flower', and says: "One metaphor predominates and many combinations are rung on it. ...Every succeeding line in the poem modifies and enriches the central metaphor of renewal." ¹.

We may illustrate this again by thinking of our room with the windows looking into it. To have many different windows rather than just one is undoubtedly a great advantage, but equally so is it to have one large picture window rather than several small ones. This, too, allows a much clearer view into the room. A broader view, taking in the whole room at once, is now permitted, something impossible no matter how many small windows there were. The big window can do all and more that several small ones can. Thus if we can trace an all-encompassing metaphor, a super-model, then we shall have a precious gem indeed. In our study a super-model could emerge which was relevant to one.

1. TeSelle, op. cit., pp.100-101.

particular passage, and which united the thought and the metaphors of that passage. Then, knowing the centre of the argument by a central metaphor, more peripheral matters and more peripheral metaphors would fall into place. Alternatively, a super-model, albeit perhaps without a great deal of particularity, might also be able to unite the various models of different contexts (though, once again, it should be said that great caution would need to be exercised in any comparison between contexts).

But we must not overplay this aspect. On the one hand we have the statement that the more metaphors there are the better. On the other we seem to be seeking to narrow the options down to just one big metaphor and saying that that is best. There would appear to be a contradiction. In fact, the answer lies in not allowing either approach to become exclusive - ideally, it is a case of 'both...and' rather than 'either...or'. Certainly we want windows located at different points around the room as that is the only way to see into every corner. But equally certainly we want one or two big windows to give us that all-embracing perspective. The small windows will still illuminate the general perspective of the big window. Neither type is dispensable.

Pepper envisages a person's "world hypotheses" as arising by fastening on some area of common sense which then becomes the basic analogy, the "root metaphor".

He goes on:

"A list of its structural characteristics becomes his basic concepts of explanation and description. We call them a set of categories. In terms of these categories he proceeds to study all other areas of fact whether uncriticized or previously criticized. He undertakes to interpret all facts in terms of these categories. As a result of the impact of these other facts upon his categories, he may qualify and readjust the categories, so that a set of categories commonly changes and develops. ...Some root metaphors prove more fertile than others, have greater power of expansion and adjustment. These survive in comparison with the others and generate the relatively adequate world theories." 1.

For our own purposes we can see from this how both the big and the small metaphors have their place. The super-models have the all-embracing function described earlier while the particular models give their own insights and serve to modify the super-model. The super-model is not immune from all change. We need to remember at all times that what we have in the New Testament is, as it were, a slice in time. The metaphors we shall discover about baptism, be they of the super-model or the particular category, are those which were in use at the moment of writing. There is no guarantee they were being used even ten years earlier, nor ten years later. We have a 'frozen moment' and our job is to study what was there then. But let us not suppose that the models we find were: a) the only ones in use at that time (a very different matter from the only ones written

1. S.C. Pepper, World Hypotheses (1942), pp.91-2, quoted in Black, Models and Metaphors, pp.239-40.

in the piece of literature we have preserved and canonised); b) the only ones ever to be. Indeed, we know for a fact that other models, not found in the New Testament, later arose and held dominant places in church vocabulary.

However, before leaving this matter of super-models one more point must be made, and made particularly in the light of the limited amount of literature with which we are dealing. It is possible for an all-embracing model to exist, providing an important idea in the background, without being actually mentioned in any one piece of literature. This is an unspecified super-model. Since it is unspecified we might do better to refer to it as the metaphorical context. Given a number of smaller, particular models, this metaphorical context is the general but unwritten super-model behind them. Perhaps it is simply the framework of thought of the writer, a framework which appears in a metaphorical form. (Perhaps a particular model, more precisely speaking of that framework, certainly is used by the writer but just not in the piece of literature remaining to us.)

A particular metaphorical context may lie behind any one use of a word in the New Testament. This can be of considerable importance, just as the picture on the backdrop to a stage can alter the audience's whole understanding of what is being enacted. Superficially literal language may need to be understood in the light of a submerged metaphor, that is, on the basis of the

metaphorical context.

Wheelwright says:

"Since the terms of expressive discourse, unlike those of steno-discourse, cannot be controlled apriori by explicit definition, their referentially intimate meanings must be determined afresh on each occasion of their use - in part by a relatively persistent core of meaning which unites and relates the various semantic occasions together, in part by the entire relevant context which the particular occasion gathers up and partly generates." 1.

Wheelwright sees a two-fold influence on the meaning of a word - the generally accepted sense and the meaning governed by the particular context. As an example of this he takes Shakespeare's use of the tempest which does not carry precisely the same meaning in King Lear, Macbeth, and The Tempest.

"There is a partial identity of course, for the tempest in all its manifestations stands opposed in the Shakespearean dialectic to such humanly favourable image-symbols as music, jewels, and feasting. The tempest represents in one way or another those forces, incompletely known, that shake and threaten man's human condition. But man's human condition in its specificity is individually different in each of Shakespeare's plays. And therefore any symbol representing it must allow of semantic shifts and adjustments to the particular dramatic and noetic situation." 2.

This can be true also of an individual word, as we found in the case of 'blood'. We cannot simply take alone a word's face value, but we must examine also whether there be a metaphorical context which will influence our understanding of that word. One of the difficulties commentators have often found with baptism

1. Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain, p.80.

2. Ibid.

in the New Testament is that many of the references appear to be simple literal references to certain people being baptized. The passages in themselves seem to be nothing other than "steno-discourse", to borrow Wheelwright's term. But we shall be wise to look for the odd word or phrase which gives us the clue to the particular context in which the apparently steno-reference is made. Thus we may find the backdrop which will colour the word. And, should we find the same context recurring, then not only shall we have to take account of super-models, but also of super-metaphorical contexts.

One characteristic which we have not hitherto highlighted is the controlling function of a metaphor itself in any particular piece of language. A metaphor opens up vistas by which some reality is viewed as never before - but, while it does this it also provides a strict control on what is seen. Black explains this well:

"Suppose I look at the night sky through a piece of heavily smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear. Then I shall see only the stars that can be made to lie on the lines previously prepared upon the screen, and the stars I do see will be seen as organized by the screen's structure. We can think of a metaphor as such a screen and the system of "associated commonplaces" of the focal word as the network of lines upon the screen. We can say that the principal subject is "seen through" the metaphorical expression - or, if we prefer, that the principal subject is "projected upon" the field of the subsidiary subject." 1.

Black goes on to give a further example. Were we to

1. Black, op. cit., p.41.

describe a battle, using words drawn from the game of chess, then the very language used would control our description:

"The enforced choice of the chess vocabulary will lead some aspects of the battle to be emphasized, others to be neglected, and all to be organized in a way that would cause much more strain in other modes of description. The chess vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of the battle that might not be seen at all through another medium." 1.

Thus if a man is called a wolf, our image of that man is that left on the screen of wolf-related common-places - that he preys on others, is fierce, hungry, struggles, scavenges, etc. Black explains that what has happened is that these traits of the man have been rendered prominent, other traits being pushed into the background. "The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others - in short, organizes our view of man." 2.

This is important to grasp. Metaphors do not simply evoke their subject and that is all. Rather they evoke a particular way of looking at their subject, allow us to see it from a certain angle, and that is all. They control our view. Metaphors may give us at times our only possible insight but do not give a permit for a walk-round inspection. The word or words used as the metaphor afford their own unique insight

1. Black, op. cit., p.42.

2. Ibid., p.41.

into the reality. We are only entitled to relate to the reality the commonplaces associated with that metaphor.

Indeed, as Black goes on to say, in a sustained piece of poetry or prose, even those commonplaces may be further limited. By offering some limited definitions of his meaning of the metaphor, the writer can restrict still further the view it gives. Effectively he can blank out a few more lines on the glass through which he examines the sky.

"...the writer can establish a novel pattern of implications for the literal uses of the key expressions, prior to using them as vehicles for his metaphors. (An author can do much to suppress unwanted implications of the word "contract", by explicit discussion of its intended meaning, before he proceeds to develop a contract theory of sovereignty. Or a naturalist who really knows wolves may tell us so much about them that his description of man as a wolf diverges quite markedly from the stock uses of that figure.) Metaphors can be supported by specially constructed systems of implications, as well as by accepted commonplaces; they can be made to measure and need not be reach-me-downs." 1.

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1. Black, op. cit., p.43. Of course, that may then mean that no longer are we being given an accurate representation of the author's view of whatever it is he uses as his picture. Gale says: "It is to be recognized...that in Paul's use of analogy his pictures provide no reliable clue as to his thought or understanding with respect to the phenomena or life situations that those pictures represent or from which they are drawn. Numerous pictures... simply do not conform to reality. The apostle has adjusted them in order that they might serve his purpose, sketching into them, so to speak, certain elements that may illustrate or reinforce his thought or argument; but they do not correspond to what anyone could really believe with respect to the phenomena or life situations supposedly represented." Gale, The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul, p.231.

Thus it is never enough to look simply at the metaphor and then interpret whatever it speaks of, all in isolation from the tenor and implications of the passage in which it has been set. We must be sure how the writer means us to understand the word in the metaphor before we transfer its meaning over to our subject. Inevitably, therefore, to study metaphors of baptism will involve understanding the meaning of the words used as metaphors, and particularly their meaning for each context (realising that it may be the context which decides that meaning). There is no short-cut around this process.

A corollary of establishing a "novel pattern of implications", such as that spoken of by Black, is that great caution must be observed not to over-readily transfer the significance of a picture in one context to apparently the same picture in another context. As an example of this Gale takes Paul's use of the analogy of a covenant. He points out that in Gal.3:15-18 it is used to illustrate permanence - a covenant cannot change. Yet in 1 Cor.11:25 and 2 Cor.3:4, Paul uses words (partly put in the mouth of Christ) which seem to speak of a covenant that is 'new' over against that which is 'old'. Gale says: "In this contrast between the new and old covenants there is clearly an idea of the one displacing or superseding the other." ¹. He

1. Gale, op. cit., p.43.

goes on to give a fuller exegesis of the Galatian passage to show how Paul has not contradicted himself in respect of his total thought. But then he draws a general conclusion regarding Paul's use of an analogy: "Even the element in the analogy which has significance in one context does not necessarily have a similar significance in other contexts." 1.

One of the ways in which the meaning of a word used as a metaphor is controlled, limited, is by the addition to it of what Ramsey calls a 'qualifier'. This, he says, "is a directive which prescribes a special way of developing those 'model' situations". 2. The basis of a model, a metaphor, is transference of meaning from the known object to the unknown. To some extent that seems a simple process. However, as we have noted, we do not always wish to carry over all the implications of the word. Ramsey takes as an example the word 'father' as applied to God. It constitutes a good model, being generally known and carrying useful pictures of guidance, helpfulness, concern, and of the child's dependence.

"On the other hand, human fathers are limited; all of us quiver before our sons' headmasters; and the time comes when a son knows all that his father does and a bit more; when the son comprehends his father through and through. Even more seriously, fathers are creatures themselves, with their own frailties, and in due time

1. Gale, op. cit., p.45.

2. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.62.

they die. So if we are to use father-situations at all we must somehow group them to tell the right kind of stories." 1.

Effectively what Ramsey means is that somehow our understanding of this model has to be controlled. We are not to be allowed to transfer over all the possible connotations of 'father'. He illustrates the control mechanism by using the Athanasian Creed which speaks of the Father as uncreate, incomprehensible, and eternal.

"These are stimulants to move us in the right direction along a series of father-situations. They are directives so that we shall think away the inappropriate features. If by assimilating Father Almighty to Father Christmas we have grown accustomed to thinking of God with a beard, here is a directive that we should shave it off. So these words like 'uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal', tell us how to develop pictures of fatherhood...". 2.

These words, therefore, are qualifiers for they control the use of the word to which they are attached. They guide the reader into the proper mode of understanding, showing which features are not to be carried over.

Ramsey's use of the word "stimulants" regarding qualifiers is suggestive of a different aspect of their work, and that is to 'push' language in such a way that the nature of the language is revealed. He returns to the example of the Athanasian Creed, and asks:

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.175.

2. Ibid.

"How can a father - it might be said - be almighty, incomprehensible, eternal? But this very puzzle, scandal, or impropriety, shows us that the word for which the phrase stands, i.e. 'God', has a placing away from all 'father' language. ...In this sense 'uncreate' and its logical kinsmen are signposts to the odd logical placing of our key word 'God'." 1.

Another example Ramsey gives is that of the introductory words of the Lord's Prayer. 2. The prayer begins 'Our Father', words which do not by themselves tell us that a model is being used. These words could be uttered in a perfectly literal way by some children to their father. But in the prayer there is immediately added the qualifier 'in heaven', and as soon as that is done the metaphoric nature of the 'father' reference is revealed by the qualifier pointing the word to God. The metaphor has been stimulated into revealing itself by the addition of a qualifier. What has happened is that by placing a seemingly literal statement in an odd context, its non-literal status is shown. 'Our Father' is not obviously metaphorical until it is put in the context of a prayer addressed to God. Once that is done, while the words have not changed, the odd context shows the metaphoric nature of the 'father' reference. The qualifier reveals the context, and it is the

1. Ramsey, Religious Language, p.176. Because these words affect the logical placing of the models to which they are attached, Ramsey calls them 'logical qualifiers'.

2. Ramsey, Christian Discourse, p.73.

context which reveals the metaphorical status of the language. 1.

An odd context, such as that given by a qualifier, can also stimulate a dead metaphor back to life. A word which has been used so often in the same context may, as we know, lose its original sense and be treated as literal language in that context. But metaphorical life can be put back into the word again, in a way very similar to the example we have just seen, by careful use of contexts. When a word's original signification has been lost, restoring the word to its original context is effectively to put it in an odd context. Thus Caird says:

"A dead metaphor may be revived by restoring it to the original context of its vehicle, as happens in children's jokes and riddles ('What has eyes and cannot see?'). Terms such as justification and redemption, for example, have become technical terms of a theological jargon, but may be revitalised by recalling their original setting in law court and slavery." 2.

Fowler illustrates this too, using the word 'sift'. In a phrase such as 'the sifting of evidence', Fowler says the metaphor is so familiar that a sieve is not consciously being thought of. But if someone

1. Caird is also aware of this function of language and speaks of the addition of a 'defining noun' (e.g., 'the sword of the Spirit', Eph.6:17), or of a 'qualifying adjective' (e.g., 'the true bread', Jn.6:32). The Language and Imagery of the Bible, pp.187-8.

2. Ibid., p.153.

spoke of 'sifting evidence with acid tests', or of 'sifting evidence with a microscope', the oddness in putting the idea of 'sifting' with such a method or instrument would inject metaphorical life back into 'sift' (albeit the resulting metaphor being rather poor or inappropriate). Fowler says: "...under such a stimulus our m. turns out to have been not dead but dormant".¹ Whether, then, it is by a qualifier or one of these other means, a dead metaphor put into an unusual context may be revitalised and used again as a live metaphor.

Thus in our study of Paul's metaphors of baptism we must be alive to these 'revealing' characteristics of qualifiers. The presence of a qualifier, or the use of words in an odd context, could make all the difference between taking a reference to baptism literally or metaphorically. And, when a qualifier shows us a metaphor is being used, we cannot be content simply to identify the metaphor itself. That may be the correct beginning, but we must also see how the attached qualifier will guide and control our understanding of what the metaphor is saying about baptism. Where a qualifier is given, a proper understanding of the writer's intention with that metaphor can only be attained in the light of the influence of the qualifier.

1. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, p.349.

Finally, we need to take account of what may be called the "instability of language".¹ Caird says that it is indefensible to think that merely by retaining the same language there is a guarantee of eternal and unchanging truth. Rather, "...because we live in a linguistically mobile world, we need to keep running if we are to remain in the same place".² Richards also gives a general fluidity to language: "A chief cause of misunderstanding...is the Proper Meaning Superstition. That is, the common belief...that a word has a meaning of its own (ideally, only one) independent of and controlling its use and the purpose for which it should be uttered."³ And Skelton says there are very few words indeed which are as stable as the general reader tends to believe.⁴ He argues that due account must be taken of the multiple possibilities of a single word or image, and adds:

"This insistence may not irritate poets and lovers of poetry, but it may well irritate others who base their lives and communications upon the supposition that words are stable in meaning, and that these meanings cannot be changed by anything but an act of God, or possibly of the Académie Française and the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary." 5.

1. See Skelton, Poetic Truth, p.30.

2. Caird, op. cit., p.84.

3. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p.11. He does allow stability in the technical languages of the sciences. Op. cit., p.72.

4. See Skelton, op. cit., p.11.

5. Ibid., pp.30-31.

Partly these writers are condemning the attitude that words retain one meaning which is passed on from generation to generation. Language shifts its meaning, and each generation is required to make the appropriate adjustments. This is one reason why new versions of the Bible continue to be published. Those responsible for their production are not only concerned to update the translation by the use of better manuscripts which become available, but are also conscious that the terminology of past centuries is inadequate and at times misleading for people today. ¹.

But partly, also, these writers are conscious that language may have more than one meaning, and even function on more than one level of meaning. Nowottny says: "Where meaning is many-faceted, language can become prismatic as easily as it can become crystal-clear - the meanings projected by one and the same form of words can splay into a spectrum of colour without loss of definition." ².

Finding a name for this particular feature of

1. Thus the Preface of the RSV says: "There are more than three hundred...English words which are used in the King James Version in a sense substantially different from that which they now convey. It not only does the King James translators no honour, but it is quite unfair to them and to the truth which they understood and expressed, to retain these words which now convey meanings they did not intend."

2. Nowottny, The Language Poets Use, p.147.

language would seem to be difficult for many possibilities are offered. Apart from "prismatic", Nowottny herself would speak of "ambiguity", but she realises that this tends to have unfortunate connotations, and therefore proposes "... 'extraloquial', if one might suppose that it would suggest having extra meaning or leaving extra meaning in." ¹. Skelton, alternatively, prefers to speak of perceiving in a "spatial" fashion: "That is to say that, whereas normally a word appears to have a distinct single meaning and a series of possible variations and associations, and must be used in such a way that only one or two of these possibilities are evoked, now the word seems to operate as a unity of all its powers." ². Eliade gives yet another term: "An essential characteristic of religious symbolism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously several meanings the unity between which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience." ³. Lastly, Wheelwright uses the word "plurisignation" to describe basically the same facet of language:

1. Nowottny, op. cit., p.156.

2. Skelton, op. cit., p.1. Now, he adds, the word is a "portmanteau".

3. M. Eliade, The Two and the One, trans., J.M. Cohen (London: Harvill Press, 1965), p.203.

"...an expressive symbol tends on any given occasion of its realization, to carry more than one legitimate reference - or if not something definite enough to be called a reference, then at least more than one legitimate group of connotations and suggestions - in such a way that its full meaning involves a tension between two or more directions of semantic stress." 1.

Thankfully, what is important is not to arrive at the correct name for this feature of language, but to be alive to it. What the writer who uses this method is doing is avoiding complete specificity in order to transcend the limitations of ordinary language. His way of doing this, as Nowottny points out, is simply to avoid ever getting fully into these limitations. 2.

Naturally, if there is to be any real communication of an intended meaning or meanings, a reader must be given some guidance regarding interpretation. Nowottny explains how this is done:

"The ambiguity of language as such would destroy the usefulness of language altogether if it were not that the particular context brings out the

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1. Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain, p.81. We might also have used TeSelle's word "multi-signification" but she does not define it in any simple way. She principally uses the term to refer to a time when figurative language predominated and words were at once concrete and abstract, material and immaterial, physical and mental, outer and inner. An example would be $\pi\nu\epsilon\omicron\mu\alpha$, variously used in biblical literature for breath, wind, air and spirit. Gradually, however, the unity of such words is lost, but poets can attempt to return to it. See TeSelle, Speaking in Parables, pp.53f.
 2. See Nowottny, op. cit., p.156.

relevant meaning and causes the irrelevant to be excluded. This means, in effect, that the whole art of exploiting common ambiguities lies in the art with which a particular context is shaped to bring out a selection from the many potential meanings our vocabulary affords." 1.

This is how Wheelwright sees the matter also, similarly pointing out that the meanings attached to a plurisign are not necessarily all the meanings of which the word is capable. The skilful writer will manipulate his contexts so that the reader will think only of the intended meanings: "Thus Eliot's manner of contextualizing the Dove imagery in "Little Gidding" directs the reader's mind to take the Dove as symbolizing both a bombing plane and the Holy Ghost; but not the Dove of Peace, although in other contexts that meaning might have been suggested." 2.

From all the possibilities for language which this raises, Nowottny considers one to be of outstanding importance: "...that is, the possibility of cueing the reader to take a word as a referent both for some quality of a physical phenomenon and for some mental attitude towards it." 3. Some object or event can be referred to in words which at the same time imbue it with significance. Not only is an object or event being referred to, but it is also in some way being

1. Nowottny, op. cit., p.166.

2. Wheelwright, op. cit., p.82.

3. Nowottny, op. cit., p.161.

described. This may well need to be the case where something more than just a literal description of a physical phenomenon is wanted - and that is precisely the case with baptism, as we said earlier.¹ Richards sees such ambiguity in language, especially in poetry and religion, as "the indispensable means of most of our most important utterances".²

In practice this may mean that words not only give more than one meaning, but do so by functioning at one and the same time on both the literal and metaphorical levels. Richards illustrates this: "...when a man has a wooden leg, is it a metaphoric or a literal leg? The answer to this last is that it is both. It is literal in one set of respects, metaphoric in another."³ The leg does hold up the man, and he does walk with it - in these respects it is literally a leg. Yet it is a piece of wood, and called a 'leg' as a metaphor arising out of the appearance and function of a 'real' leg. Thus Richards concludes:

"A word may be simultaneously both literal and metaphoric, just as it may simultaneously support many different metaphors, may serve to focus into one meaning many different meanings. This point is of some importance, since so much misinterpretation comes from supposing that if a word works one way it cannot simultaneously work in

1. See above, pp.23f.

2. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p.40.

3. Ibid., p.118.

another and have simultaneously another meaning." ^{1.}

As we study Paul's language about baptism, then, we must take heed of all these injunctions regarding the fluid nature of language. We must, as Nowottny suggests, "decline citizenship in that kingdom of single-eyed men to which language (as ordinarily used) aspires." ^{2.} We cannot assume that Paul's language has only one meaning. To do that is to have an over-narrow view of language, common though that may be. Neither, of course, is there licence to concoct abhorrent forms of spiritualized meanings never intended by Paul. Rather we must approach each text open-minded on this matter, and allow ourselves to be guided by the context.

In this chapter we have encountered some of the strengths and some of the limitations of metaphors. The strengths can only be enjoyed if metaphors are used properly - hence our reason for looking at some of these rules and characteristics. The limitations, too, can only be recognised with a proper awareness of these same characteristics.

The great blessing of the metaphorical approach is that it will take us where other language not only fears but is unable to tread. It can speak in its own way of things regarding which other forms of discourse must remain silent. This is metaphor's greatest answer

1. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, pp.118-9.

2. Nowottny, op. cit., p.156.

to those who find it strange and, therefore, unpalatable. Of course, given our situation where we are not writing metaphorical discourse but examining it, those who would shrink from such language have to be told to face reality. If Paul chose to use metaphors then there is no point in complaining now. Our task must be to study these metaphors for what they are, giving due notice to the characteristics of the language employed.

CHAPTER IV

ROMANS 6:3

This passage is often highlighted as Paul's most extensive treatment of baptism. One writer heads up his page: "The Pauline Doctrine of Baptism 3-11", and then says: "Rom. 6:3-11 is the locus classicus for St. Paul's doctrine of baptism." ¹.

However, if we are ever to understand Paul's meaning, that view needs carefully to be qualified. Paul's purpose in writing is not to speak of baptism. No matter how troublesome that topic may be to the church of today, there was no argument in Rome about baptism which necessitated Paul writing about it. ².

Rather, Paul seeks in this chapter to cure any misunderstanding from his preceding chapters. In 5:20 he has argued that grace abounds over sin. In the light of that, as Barrett puts it: "...why should Christians be good?". ³. Paul realises (6:1) that a

1. M. Black, Romans (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), p.93.

2. Käsemann says: "From the various epistles of Paul all kinds of material can be collected on the theology and practice of baptism, and it is obvious that he valued it no less than the eucharist. Nevertheless, Paul never gave a comprehensive account of it. This implies that the rite and its meaning were not disputed in his circles." E. Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, trans. and ed. G.W. Bromiley (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1980), p.164.

3. C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1957), p.120.

strict logic could presume that Christians could go on sinning and grace would prevail every time. He must deal with any such suggestion. "Paul now turns to check the antinomian reductio ad absurdum of the arguments he has used in the faith-works controversy." ¹.

His answer is swift, concise, and emphatic. If, as he has shown in ch.5, previously they were dead because of sin, now they are dead to sin. Paul writes metaphorically: μὴ γένοιτο. οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ἢσσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; (v.2). ². The Christian has a dead relationship to sin, and that fact should prevent him going on sinning. So v.2 is the heading for the passage, and what is written in the next few verses is there for the purpose of explaining and justifying that statement. Dunn says: "It is important to grasp that the subject of Rom.6 is not baptism but death to sin and the life which follows from it. ...Too many commentators speak as though v.2 was not there. ...On the contrary, v.2 is the key without which the meaning of the passage cannot be unlocked and

1. J.D.G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), p.139.

2. That Paul chooses οἵτινες; instead of the ordinary relative οἱ is significant. Murray calls it a relative of "quality" meaning 'we who are of the sort' or 'as many of us who'. -J. Murray, The Epistle to the Romans (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1967), p.213. Barrett gives the sense as 'we who in our essential nature, i.e., just because we are Christians, died'. See Barrett, op. cit., p.121.

opened up." 1.

Why then speak of baptism at all? Without presuming on the rest of our discussion, Nygren gives us an answer:

"When (Paul) entered upon this point it was not primarily to give an explanation of baptism. The reason for the discussion was the question, 'Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?' The strongest answer with which he could meet that question was precisely by referring to baptism and what happens through it." 2.

So if we are in any sense about to be given Paul's most extensive treatment of baptism, let us realise that baptism is mentioned only in order to explain something else, and that is how the Christian is considered to be dead to sin. Of course, that baptism is able to be used by Paul for this purpose is important for our understanding of his meaning here.

1. Dunn, op. cit., pp.139,140.

2. A. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, trans. C.C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p.239. Other writers make similar points: "(Paul) is not, in the present passage, expounding the nature of a sacrament as such, but exploiting the accepted significance of the sacrament for a paedagogical purpose...". C.H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932), p.87; "...the section vi.1-14 is motivated by an ethical-parenetic point of view, and this must be carefully observed when interpreting Paul's representations about baptism." R. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), p.32; "...it cannot be too firmly emphasized that Paul's concern in this passage was not to give a theological excursus on the nature of Christian baptism but to oppose the heretical appeal, 'Let us carry on in sin that grace may abound!' (Rom.6.1)." G.R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962), p.143.

As we come now to what Paul does say concerning baptism, our procedure will be to handle it in three stages: to outline the nature and metaphorical structure of the reference to baptism; to further justify that interpretation by reference to the wider passage; to deal with objections to such a metaphorical interpretation.

Our first task is to consider the logical level of the language before us. This is the task of "logical mapping" which we considered earlier.¹ There is nothing unusual about the grammatical structure of what Paul says, for example, in v.3. But, as we know, that fact must not mislead us into believing that straightforward grammar implies straightforward logic.

Consider the following two statements:

- a) 'Two thieves have died with Jesus'
- b) 'Christians have died with Jesus'

Grammatically these statements have an identical structure. Yet, if our meaning in the second is not one of physical death, while they are grammatically the same, the logic of the two statements varies. We cannot therefore treat the two statements in the same way. If we do, then the meaning goes askew, and by treating the second on the logical level of the first, we should imagine a mass slaughter of Christians at the time of the death of Christ. Rather, of course, we must

1. See above, pp.42ff.

handle the first statement as literal and the second as metaphorical. Only then can we begin to arrive at the correct meaning.

Consider now two further statements:

- a) 'A disciple has bumped into Jesus'
- b) 'A disciple has been baptized into Jesus'

Apart from a change from active to passive voice, once more our two statements parallel each other grammatically. But while the first refers to an event which could have happened on any day Jesus walked down the street, the second has a different logic. While it may refer in part to a physically observable event, the expression as it stands transcends any such merely literal meaning, and by metaphor goes further.

As we study Paul's words now in Rom.6 we can see more clearly the logical level of his language in some of the key expressions used of baptism:

ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν

εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν

συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον

This is not straightforward language. This cannot be treated on the same level as statements about thieves dying with Christ or disciples bumping into him. In varying forms, this is the language of metaphor, and must be treated as such. ¹.

1. We are speaking of language which, by its metaphors, gives us insight into the meaning of baptism. This must not be confused with the very common idea that
(Contd.)

The principle metaphor lies in the v.3 phrase

ἡβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, in particular in

Contd.)

baptism is itself a symbolic, metaphorical act, in particular copying what happened to Christ. Of baptism in Rom.6 Sanday and Headlam say: "It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ. Immersion = Death. Submersion = Burial (the ratification of Death). Emergence = Resurrection." W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p.153; "...baptism is regarded as the repetition, in a dramatic act, of the experience of Christ. The sinking into the water corresponds to his death, the immersion to his burial, the rising from the water to his resurrection." E.F. Scott, The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p.45 (his comments are directed at our passage here); "This is what being baptized 'into Christ Jesus' means, a re-enactment for the believer of what once happened to our Lord." W.F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism (London: SPCK, 1957), p.59; "...den Täufling mit dem ganzen Leibe ins Wasser einzutauchen. Dieser Ritus stellt sinnbildlich ein Begrabenwerden (im Wasser) dar." P. Althaus, Der Brief an die Römer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), p.54; Kennedy calls baptism a "picture" and an "illustration", H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), p.291. From the text it is immediately obvious that Paul nowhere uses terms such as "repetition", "dramatic act", "re-enactment", "symbol", "picture", or "illustration". There is no indication that the mode of baptism is in Paul's mind. Best says: "...there is no suggestion that the believer dies like Christ; he rather dies with Christ." E. Best, One Body in Christ (London: SPCK, 1955), p.47. And Murray writes: "The assumption of so many commentators, non-baptist as well as baptist, to the effect that the apostle has in view the mode of immersion as vividly portraying our burial with Christ and emergence with him in his resurrection is without warrant. ...Suffice it at present to be reminded that we have no more warrant to find a reference to the mode of baptism in συνετάφημεν here in vs.4 than in σύμφυτοι in vs.5, συνεστρωρώθη in vs.6, ἐνεδύσασθε in Gal.3:27, all of which bear no analogy to the mode of immersion." Murray, op. cit., fn., p.215.

the word ἑβαπτίσθημεν. The verb is passive and aorist, thus referring to a single moment in the past. βαπτίζω basically means 'dip', 'plunge', ^{1.} 'dip repeatedly', 'immerge', or 'submerge'. ^{2.} Epictetus used the passive of βαπτίζω to mean 'to be drowned', ^{3.} and Polybius used it to mean the sinking or disabling of ships. ^{4.} The general sense of βαπτίζω is clear - he who is baptized is immersed or plunged. ^{5.}

Now, βαπτίζω by itself could be considered to have no more than a literal meaning, or, more accurately, to be a dead metaphor. While it had had a general 'plunging' meaning, that meaning had been transferred to a particular religious act, and through constant repetition in that context assumed a virtually literal meaning of experiencing the act. Such could be said to be the case in a reference such as Acts 8:12:

ἑβαπτίσθησαν ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες.

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1. According to H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, I (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p.305.
 2. According to C.L.W. Grimm, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, trans., revised and enlarged by J.H. Thayer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), p.94.
 3. Gnomologium 47 (1st/2nd centuries AD). See Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p.305.
 4. Fragmenta 1.51.6; 8.8.4; 16.6.2 (2nd century BC). See Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p.305, and Grimm, op. cit., p.94.
 5. No thought of the mode of baptism is intended by these words.

In Rom.6 Paul similarly could have used βαπτίσω on its own. He could have said: ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ἐβαπτίσθημεν, and then gone on in some other way to explain the relevance of mentioning baptism. That would have constituted no more than a reference to the act of baptism.

Of course that is not what Paul wrote, but rather ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. Now, the effect of the fuller phrase is to reveal a metaphorical meaning for ἐβαπτίσθημεν. The word can exist on a literal basis but be restored to a metaphorical sense by being joined to εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. This is an example, similar to those we noted before,¹ of a word being shown to be metaphorical because of the oddness of the context in which it is used. For we would normally expect βαπτίσω to be joined to ὕδωρ (as at Mt.3:11, βαπτίσω ἐν ὕδατι). In that association there would be nothing to startle us, nothing to make us think of a metaphor. But when a baptism is not into water but into a person, the language is clearly on a different logical plane. The difference is the same as that between statements of bumping into Jesus and being baptized into Jesus. In one there is no oddness at all - to speak of bumping into a person is to use language in what is considered a literal way. But that could not be said regarding a statement of baptism into a person. The

1. See above, pp.106ff.

oddness, the incongruity of context reveals a metaphor in the verb *ἐβαπτίσθημεν*.

The translation of the full phrase is: "we were baptized into Christ Jesus", but the effect of the metaphor is better appreciated if we render it: "we were immersed into Christ Jesus".

Yet while *ἐβαπτίσθημεν* is metaphor it is not that alone, for it does not exclude the thought of the act of baptism. When this was discussed earlier ¹. we noted how a physical object or event could be spoken of in such a way as to imbue it with significance. This is what Paul does here. *βαπτίζω* refers to the physical event of baptism, but, by its mixture with other language, it at the same time imparts meaning by metaphor to that event. Only the context can tell us for sure that this double reference is intended. And we have just seen how the oddness of the context gives a metaphorical sense, and the presence of the noun *βάπτισμα* in v.4 puts it beyond reasonable doubt that the event of baptism is also in Paul's mind in this passage. He does not employ *βαπτίζω* as Jesus did (Mk.10:38; Lk.12:50) as metaphor and metaphor alone. Rather he intends both metaphorical and literal meanings to be understood. ².

1. See above, pp.114ff.

2. Another illustration of how metaphorical language may also include within itself a reference to something straightforward, something 'literal', may be helpful. A 'revivalist' preacher might tell of a service where people wept as he preached, others
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That should not lessen the force of Paul's metaphor. To speak of merging, immersing into Christ evokes a strong image which refers to the relationship between Christ and the Christian established in baptism. The word βαπτίζω is important here. This word, being the focus, the pivotal point of the metaphor, must be allowed to control our thought. By using a strong metaphor Paul does not mean us to think that we have been 'brought into contact' with Christ, or that we have 'encountered' Christ. The metaphor is βαπτίζω and the Christian is therefore immersed in Christ. Put crudely, as a ship sinks beneath the waves, or a drowning man goes under the water, so the baptisand has been immersed into Christ. The 'shape' of the view given by βαπτίζω is of a particular kind quite different from any other. Had Paul meant his readers to understand the relationship of Christ to the Christian as less than that pictured by βαπτίζω then he would have used a different metaphor. Of course, as we are aware, not every possible connotation of the metaphor need be intended. For a ship to

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prayed, others shouted 'Hallelujah!'. As long as he spoke in these terms his language would be literal alone. But, alternatively, he might use the old-fashioned phrase to sum it all up and say 'The fire fell!'. Now, no-one imagines the revivalist's church is going to make a claim for fire damage from its insurance company. He was speaking metaphorically. But that metaphorical language did also refer to identifiable events, in this case to the reactions during a particular church service. It was the language of metaphor, but it included a literal reference.

be sunk or a man to be drowned is undesirable and unintentional, resulting in those who experience such things being considerably worse off! Such connotations are obviously not those meant by Paul. The particular force of the word which would seem to be intended is the completeness of the immersion into Christ. As the water completely covers a ship or a drowned man, so the baptisand is completely immersed in Christ. (The logic of the rest of the passage, as we shall find, depends on a oneness with Christ.)

Paul controls this strong metaphor, however, by the use of a qualifier. The full phrase which we have been examining is *ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*. The metaphor is in the verb *ἐβαπτίσθημεν*, and the *εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* is a qualifier of that metaphor. (It was the presence of this qualifier which put the whole phrase into a context which was odd for a literal meaning of *βαπτίζω*, and thus showed that the verb had to be understood metaphorically.) Qualifiers, we may recall, control the use of the word to which they are attached. Or, as Ramsey put it, they are "stimulants to move us in the right direction".¹

This is what happens here. By including *εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* Paul completes the metaphor, or, rather, shows us the application of the metaphor. This is baptism *εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*. The effect of the baptism for the

1. See above, p.106.

believer is to bring about the particular relationship to Jesus Christ which is spoken of by the metaphor. The qualifier stimulates us to think along these lines. And because the qualifier has focussed the attention in baptism on an immersion into Christ, commonplaces which match the image thus evoked then become allowable. These could include: being 'one with Christ', being 'merged with Christ', being 'united to Christ', and also the very simple but common Pauline phrase, being 'in Christ'.¹ Since these expressions basically conform to the metaphor and qualifier, they are permissible terms by which we may speak of this baptism. Obviously, the precise appropriateness of each remains open to debate.

Also, by guiding our thought into a particular channel, the qualifier effectively prohibits any other. We are not, for example, to think of a baptism εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Mk.1:4), nor a baptism εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος (Mt.28:19). And the qualifier acts here as a brake on our thought in such a way that until this metaphor and qualifier are fully considered, the next phrase is not to be looked at. In other words, until the application, the goal of baptism (i.e., εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν) has been properly appreciated, the reader is not meant to proceed to any reference to the death of Christ. The metaphor is qualified to make us see its applicability

1. We shall say more on this last phrase shortly.

to Christ Jesus. The qualifier expands the perspective (in the direction of Christ), and also controls the range of that perspective (so that the reader does not think past Christ).

We have, then, a metaphor of immersion, and a qualifier which applies that immersion to Christ. The link between the two is the small preposition $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. Deissmann tentatively suggested that "the understanding of Paul depended on the understanding of his prepositions", ¹. and this preposition certainly makes an important link here.

The general meaning, of course, is 'into'. Classical writers chose $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\nu$ carefully to accompany verbs of motion or rest, giving to each, therefore, its own distinct meaning. (Originally there had only been $\epsilon\nu$, but this became $\epsilon\nu\varsigma$ when used with the accusative, and then $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. ².) Thus, Moule says, "if $\epsilon\nu$ is 'punctiliar', $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ is the corresponding 'linear' word: where $\epsilon\nu$ = in, $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ would rather = into." ³. By the time

1. A. Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, trans., Wm. E. Wilson (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1923), p.163.

2. See M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek, adapted from the fourth Latin ed. by J. Smith (Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), pp.33ff.; also A. Oepke, art. $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed., G. Kittel, II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p.434.

3. C.F.D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p.67. Robertson explains that, in fact, both prepositions mean 'in', but it was the usage with verbs of motion and the accusative which gave $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ the sense of

of the New Testament this distinction was becoming blurred in Hellenistic usage (and εἰς eventually completely ousted εἰν). But there is fairly general agreement among scholars that εἰς and εἰν are properly distinguished in Matthew, the Epistles, and Revelation.^{1.}

Consequently, Turner says: "This is important for the exegete, because in Mt., the epistles and Revelation we can always presume that εἰς has its full sense even where one might suspect that it stood for εἰν." ^{2.}

That would then yield an expression in this verse of 'immersion into Christ'. Speaking of this passage (and Mt.28:19), Robertson says: "...the notion of sphere is the true one". ^{3.} Best says: "...there is definitely a 'local' flavour about the εἰς...". ^{4.}

Dunn is quite specific: "βαπτίζεσθαι εἰς inevitably carries a local or incorporative significance. βαπτίζεσθαι

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'into'. A.T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), p.591.

1. N. Turner, J.H. Moulton's A Grammar of New Testament Greek, III (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), pp. 255-6; Zerwick, op. cit., p.33; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, trans. and revised by R.W. Funk (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p.110. Dunn also mentions that confusion over εἰς and εἰν is rare in Paul. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.128.
2. Turner, op. cit., p.256. Interestingly, the example he cites is Mt.28:19, "baptism 'into' the name...".
3. Robertson, op. cit., p.592.
4. Best, op. cit., p.67.

εἰς Χριστόν is a figurative way of describing the act of God which puts a man 'in Christ'." ¹. Later he says: "...after a verb of motion like βαπτίζειν, εἰς can only have the sense of movement towards so as to be in." ².

What we have found in this verse so far, therefore, is a metaphor used of baptism (ἐβαπτίσθημεν) which, when combined with the qualifier (εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν) and the preposition (εἰς), gives a picture which speaks of Christ as if he were the water. The baptisand is immersed into water, but also, the metaphor says, he is immersed into Christ.

To some extent a picture such as this fits with the views of those who see, likewise, a picture of some sort in the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ. At least three such pictures may be mentioned as illustrative of the kind of conception which can lie behind that phrase. ³. (But

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.112.

2. Ibid., p.128.

3. It does need to be strongly stressed that there is very far from universal agreement regarding the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ in Paul's writing. Our work does not encompass that huge debate, and therefore what we are doing here is to pick out a few of the ideas from basically one 'side' of that debate, mainly because these pictures which some have found in the expression ἐν Χριστῷ are illustratively useful for our understanding of the metaphor βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν in Rom.6:3. (By noting these pictures which can be considered to lie behind the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ, our understanding of the Rom. 6:3 picture may be enlarged.) Apart from the writers we shall mention in the text, others should
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we should remind ourselves that a language 'picture' is not a 'blueprint'. We may need to sense rather than describe what is felt to lie behind the phrase.)

Deissmann, writing in 1892, is frequently held to have pioneered the investigation of this line of Paul's thought. He considered that 'in Christ' spoke of the spiritual Christ as the place where the Christian is.¹ And Scott feels that in many of the instances of the formula a 'local' significance is the only

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be consulted for a wider range of views on the meaning of *ἐν Χριστῷ*. (See, e.g., F. Neugebauer, In Christus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), and, "Das Paulinische 'In Christo'," New Testament Studies, IV, (1957-58); A. Wikenhauser, Pauline Mysticism, trans., J. Cunningham (Freiburg: Herder, and Edinburgh-London: Nelson, 1960); W. Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God, trans., B. Hardy (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966); H. Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, trans., J. Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969); A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, trans., W. Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1931); W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1917); E. Mersch, The Whole Christ, trans., J.R. Kelly (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1949); A. Oepke, art. *ἐν*, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed., G. Kittel, II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964); A.J.M. Wedderburn, "The Body of Christ and Related Concepts in 1 Corinthians," Scottish Journal of Theology, 24 (1971).)

1. A. Deissmann, Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu" (Marburg: N.G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892), pp. 81ff. His study begins with a statistical analysis of the frequency of occurrence of 'in Christ', and by-forms such as 'in him' or 'in the Lord'. He found that the formula never appears in the Synoptic Gospels, Hebrews, 2 Peter, James and Jude. Acts and 1 Peter have eight occurrences. Books in a Johannine tradition (including Revelation) contain 24 instances. But writings attributed to Paul have 164 examples, an impressive Pauline predominance. Op. cit., pp. 1-2.

legitimate one. He continues: "If we give, as it seems we must, a local sense to the preposition, at least in a number of instances, then Christ is conceived of as in some sense the habitation or dwelling-place of the Christian. Like the Spirit He is conceived of as a Sphere or Atmosphere within which men may live and move." ¹. As Scott goes on to say, much of this 'local' conception of the phrase rests on a certain equating of Christ and the Spirit, perhaps that being based on 2 Cor.3:17, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν, or perhaps on the tenor of Rom.8 where the same functions are ascribed to Christ and the Spirit. ². Not all who give to the phrase this local sense would want to depend upon such a link with the Spirit. Even without that, Christ is considered as the 'sphere' or 'dwelling-place' of the believer (often with the word 'mystical' used), and an expression such as being 'incorporated into' Christ becomes common. ³. Therefore, one picture connected with ἐν Χριστῷ makes Christ the locus of

1. C.A.A. Scott, Christianity According to St Paul (London: Cambridge University Press, 1927), p.153.

2. Ibid., pp.153-4. Bousset goes so far as to say that ἐν πνεύματι εἶναι is immediately parallel to ἐν κυρίῳ (Χριστῷ) εἶναι. He goes on: "The two formulas coincide so completely that they can be interchanged at will." W. Bousset, Kyrios Christos, trans., J.E. Stealy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p.160.

3. Although some would use that expression in a quasi-technical sense more appropriate to the third picture we shall mention.

the believer's life.

Another employs relational, almost 'family', terms, particularly using the concept of solidarity. The classic illustration of this concept concerns Achan (Josh.7), whose individual sin was regarded as that of the whole people. Cook says:

"...an individual or a specific group may be regarded as the true embodiment or representative of the many, so that not only can singulars and plurals interchange, according as one thinks of the unity or the multiplicity of a group (cf. Num. XX.17-20), but Hebrew thought refers with equal facility to a representative individual or to the group he represents." 1.

And such a oneness as this, between Christ and the believer, is held to be Paul's view. Often it is referred to as 'racial solidarity', particularly in the Adam/Christ passages in Rom.5 and 1 Cor.15. For example, 1 Cor.15:22 says: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, οὕτως καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ζωοποιηθήσονται. Adam and Christ are considered to be the heads of different 'races', and for the believer Robinson can speak of the "supersession of one solidarity by another". 2. Sometimes the term 'representative' is used instead by those who picture such a relationship to Christ. Whatever the term, the

1. S.A. Cook, "Israel Before the Prophets," The Cambridge Ancient History, eds., J.B. Bury, S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock, III (London: Cambridge University Press, 1925), p.493.

2. J.A.T. Robinson, The Body (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952), p.9.

idea is that what is true of Christ is true of the person in (solidarity with) him.

The third basic way of picturing the ἐν Χριστῷ formula employs elements of both the 'local' and the 'relational' pictures. This time use is made of Paul's language of 'the body of Christ'. 1 Corinthians uses the terminology in several places, 6:15 saying the Christians' bodies μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν, and chapter 12 developing the analogy of a body and concluding in v.27: ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. In Rom.12:5 Paul makes a statement with some similarities, but using the ἐν Χριστῷ formula: οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη. (In Colossians and Ephesians the picture is developed still further with Christ being referred to as the head over the body, e.g., Col.1:18; Eph.1:22-23.) Talk of being part, members, of the body pictures some kind of location in Christ, and also raises ideas of a common life, thus maintaining the thought of a relationship. Terms like being 'incorporated into the body of Christ', 'organic union with Christ', and of Christ as a 'corporate personality', are frequently used when this picture is in mind. ¹.

1. These categories, and the terminology which accompanies them, are by no means intended to be comprehensive or precise. With many writers it is hard to be sure what sense exactly they intend to give to some of their key expressions, and some would seem to embrace more than one of these categories at the same time.

These are, then, three pictures, or ways of thinking, considered by some to be applicable to the expression *ἐν Χριστῷ* - one saw Christ as the element or location in which believers now lived; another conceived of a relationship, a unity, a oneness, or perhaps almost of a family of whom Christ was the head; the last used elements from both of the others.

Two points emerge from this for our study:

i) What is being said in the metaphor of Rom.6:3, the idea of being immersed into Christ, could fit very well with these pictures. If, in the phrase *ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστόν*, Christ is thought of as substitute for the water, then to consider him as the 'element' or 'place' into which the believer is put by baptism is possible. Or, if the sense of oneness with Christ is brought to the fore by speaking of 'immersion', then solidarity with Christ, union with Christ, would fit that picture. And, by taking some part from each of these conceptions, the third category could also be considered. It would be quite possible to think of this metaphor in these sorts of terms. If, then, even some of the *ἐν Χριστῷ* references carry meanings along the lines of these pictures, then this could be a useful background to note from Paul's wider writing for the metaphor here in Rom.6.

ii) As we found Dunn doing, our metaphor here in Rom.6:3 could be considered to give a definite beginning in baptism to the believer's experience of being 'in

Christ' (if being 'in Christ' does refer, in some way, to a 'state'). Baptism would be the occasion of the placing of the believer in Christ as a location, into solidarity with Christ, into the body of Christ. Best takes it this way: "βαπτίζειν εἰς Χριστόν...describes the manner of entering upon the state of being-in-Christ. Those who are baptized into Christ are those who afterwards are in Christ." ¹. And Bouttier says: "Etre baptisé εἰς Χριστόν, c'est...être transféré vers le Christ Jésus, afin de vivre désormais en lui, et l'expression εἰς Χριστόν pourrait être explicitée ainsi: εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἐν Χριστῷ ." ². Because it is not germane to our study to pursue any further the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ, and whether or not a 'state' (in terms of the three categories we have listed, or some other) is intended, no final word can be given on this matter. But the picture evoked by the metaphor which we have here would seem to fit the suggestion of Dunn, Best, and Bouttier, baptism marking the point of entry into Christ as an element, or into some sort of solidarity with Christ. Paul would seem to be 'painting' a picture along these sorts of lines by this metaphor.

Returning now to the text of Rom.6:3, we find that there is a secondary qualifier of the metaphor, and that

1. Best, op. cit., p.73.

2. M. Bouttier, En Christ (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), p.37.

is the phrase εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ. Effectively what happens in v.3 is:

i) Paul states the metaphor, and gives it a primary qualifier - ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

ii) Paul repeats the metaphor, and gives it a secondary qualifier - εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν.

This secondary qualifier we could call a contextual qualifier, for its purpose is to direct our thought to the relevant meaning of the metaphor for this context. That metaphor immersed the believer into Christ. He was joined to Christ's person. That is what is implied by speaking of a baptism into Christ. But we noted earlier that v.2 was the 'heading' verse of this section and that what followed was an attempt by Paul to demonstrate that the Christian is dead to sin. This is where the secondary qualifier is needed. First Paul has qualified the experience of immersion in the direction of Christ. Now, consequent upon that, he further qualifies that immersion in the direction of the death of Christ. The reader is guided now by this qualifier to the particularly relevant thing for this context that Christ did - and that was he died. 'By baptism you were immersed into Christ,' Paul says, 'and that consequently means you were immersed into his death.' The εἰς τὸν θάνατον limits us from thinking on any other aspect of Christ's activity, and guides us to think about his death, the relevant fact for Paul's argument. Since this qualifier

(εἰς τὸν θάνατον) is totally dependent on the metaphor and first qualifier (ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν) we may call it a secondary qualifier, second both in time and importance (i.e., 'importance' for our understanding of baptism - its importance for the context is unquestioned). The first qualifier is the one specifically involved in the basic meaning of baptism, and thus it is a primary qualifier. The secondary qualifier only arises as a consequence of that first statement. It is a derivative of the first statement.

So in Rom.6:3 we have by means of a metaphor and qualifiers a shaft of vision into Paul's understanding of baptism, an understanding centered on the idea of being immersed into Jesus Christ. In consequence of that immersion into Christ the baptisand is also considered to have shared in Christ's death. Paul's reasoning is: 'You have become one with Christ - he died - therefore you have died'. Paul relates the believer to Christ's death because that follows from his general 'union' with Christ.¹ He does this, not because such a meaning is primary to that of baptism, but because it is his whole purpose in this passage to show that the Christian is dead to sin.

Having outlined the metaphorical nature and

1. Käsemann says: "Verse 3a is Paul's formulation of the premise for the traditional statement in v.3b." Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, p.165.

structure of the Rom.6 reference to baptism, we now proceed to amplify this. We must turn our attention to the wider flow of the passage, in particular the verses up to v.11. What we have found so far is a method by which Paul could conclude that Christians had 'died'. Their baptism united them to Christ, and therefore his death was now their death. This situation puts Paul within one statement (v.7) of being able to demonstrate the point he was trying to make in v.2. We can see, therefore, that the metaphor of union with Christ 'works' in the immediate context. It does lead on to the conclusion Paul was seeking. The question now concerns what sort of support it gets from the rest of the passage.

In vv.4, 6, and 8 we have joint action verbs:

συνετάφημεν, συνεσταυρώθη, and ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν.¹

These verbs are all aorists, referring therefore to a definite moment in past time,² and from the text we

1. The actual phrase σὺν Χριστῷ occurs in Romans only here in v.8, but the σύν-compound verbs virtually have the formula. Cranfield comments: "The formula ...as such seems to have originated with Paul. ...The antecedents of the Pauline formula probably include the thought of such OT passages as Ps 21.6; 73.23ff; 139.18b; 140.13b, especially as they are interpreted in the LXX, and perhaps also the thought underlying, for example, the 'with thy God' of Mic 6.8." C.E.B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, I (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1975), p.312.
2. It is hard, therefore, despite his citing of 1 Thess. 4:17 and Phil.1:23, to make sense of Dodd's statement "...that Paul constantly uses with Christ of the future state of Christians, as distinct from their present state in Christ...". Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p.89.

know they refer to joint action with Christ. In the case of συνετάφημεν it is made clear that this is διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος (and there is no reason to suppose that Paul did not have this in mind with the other two verbs). Beasley-Murray says: "Paul's first thought in this passage...is not that the believer in his baptism is laid in his own grave, but that through that action he is set alongside Christ Jesus in His...".¹

However, language of co-burial, co-crucifixion, co-death need not imply any more than 'being a neighbour to'. After all, the two thieves who died alongside Christ on Calvary were crucified with Christ, they died with Christ, and, had they been laid in the same tomb, they would have been buried with Christ. Is this, then, Paul's meaning? In that sense it obviously cannot be, for these statements could only be literally accurate in these respects in the case of the thieves, men now dead. The Roman Christians, to whom Paul was writing, were very much alive. Paul's language is metaphorical, and what he is saying is that what holds true for Christ holds true for these believers also. But, even taking account of the metaphorical status of the language, how can Paul say that? How does the crucifixion, death, and burial of Christ affect these Christians? Robinson says: "To us, the idea of being 'with' Christ conveys something more external than that of

1. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.130.

being 'in' Him. But almost certainly it did not to Paul." ¹. He lists several examples of σύν verbs (Gal.2:20; Rom.8:17; Eph.2:5;3:6), and concludes: "It is surely clear that for Paul to do or suffer anything 'with' Christ speaks of no external concomitance, like the P.T. instructor who says, 'Now do this with me', but of a common organic functioning, as the new tissues take on the rhythms and metabolism of the body into which they have been grafted." ². And, speaking with particular reference to συνετάφημεν, Schnackenburg says that by the use of σύν an 'inner connection' with Christ's dying and rising is meant, and Paul "thereby excludes a merely external co-ordination of the event in Christ and Christians". ³. The crucifixion, death,

1. Robinson, op. cit., p.62.

2. Ibid., p.63.

3. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.36. Later he expands on this: "Anyone who thinks up a key idea or a favourite conception searches also for an appropriate linguistic form of expression. Exactly that was offered to the Greek-speaking Apostle in the preposition σύν; it possessed a certain air of solemnity in the religious terminology, and it was capable of reproducing both the idea of making like another and temporal and spatial togetherness. 1 Cor.xii.26 offers a good example of this linguistic possibility in Paul: 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it (συνπάσχει); if one member receives honour, all the members rejoice with it (συγχαίρει).' An organic union is here in mind, a destiny in solidarity. But Christians also stand in a solidary union with Christ, the Founder of the new race to which they belong, and with Him they experience that which He himself went through. Paul could well have formed the σύν-compounds with this consideration in mind...". Op. cit., p.175.

and burial of Christ are considered true for the Christian because by his baptism he is immersed in Christ. These statements which can be made of Christ are now capable of being made also of the Christian. What we need to note is that, because of the baptismal metaphor of immersion into Christ, joint action verbs become particularly appropriate. The believer is 'in Christ' and therefore can be spoken of as being 'with Christ' in various activities. These *σύν* verbs strongly undergird the picture of the v.3 metaphor.

They serve in one other way also, and that is to guard against pressing the 'oneness' of the baptisand and Christ to the point of outright identity. Precisely how close the relation is of the believer to Christ is a difficult matter (as we shall find later), and there is no measure given here. But as long as *σύν* language appears it is evident that Paul can speak of Christ and believer with a clear distinction between them. What we have here, in the choice of these particular verbs, is Paul very skilfully using the metaphor, developing it, but at the same time limiting it. He does not allow just any conclusions to be drawn from it. He guards it against at least one false understanding.

Some sort of allusion to the resurrection of Christ and that of believers is made in vv.4, 5, 8, and 11. The references are not all of the same kind, and therefore are best taken individually.

v.4 ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ... οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς

ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. This is not a concrete reference to the believer's resurrection. Nevertheless, the fact that Christ has been raised is seen as affecting the believer. And that is the important point. Conceivably Paul could have said: 'You were buried with him by baptism into death, that is, you have died to sin. So now walk in newness of life.' But, actually, in order to speak of the new life of the believer Paul first speaks of Christ's resurrection. Murray says: "...baptism as signifying union with Christ (vs.3) must mean also union with Christ in his resurrection and therefore in his resurrection life." ¹.

The key words in this verse are: ὡςπερ Χριστὸς ...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς. Paul had no need to speak of Christ, unless what happened to the believer only happened because he is intimately linked with Christ and thus to what happens to him. Therefore Schnackenburg says:

"The death and resurrection of Christ as the preceding event determines that which we experience in baptism. In ὡςπερ - οὕτως, καὶ lies a comparison which, on account of the peculiar relation of Christ to the person attached to Him in baptism, also becomes a proof: corresponding to the fact that Christ did not remain in death, but was raised from the dead, we also should walk in a new life." ².

This reference to the new life of the believer is

1. Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, p.216.

2. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.36.

dependent on a real involvement of the believer in Christ's resurrection, and therefore strongly supports the baptismal 'joining' metaphor of v.3.

v.5 τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα. The future tense here is much commented upon (perhaps especially since it seems in contrast to Col.2:12).¹ There is no explicit statement made to link the believer's resurrection to Christ's resurrection. In fact, some have taken τῆς ἀναστάσεως to refer to the general resurrection of believers (cf., 1 Thess.4:16f.).² Yet it seems clear that, as the RSV and other modern versions have it, an association with Christ's resurrection is in Paul's mind. The context demands it: (a) by the general sense of the verse - it is 'his' death, and therefore an implied 'his' with regard to the resurrection makes sense; (b) if the reference was to the general resurr-

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1. Paul appears to wish to avoid any heresy that the resurrection of believers is past, as Barrett comments: "...Paul is always cautious of expressions which might suggest that the Christian has already reached his goal, and to say in so many words 'We have died with Christ and we have been raised with Christ' would be to invite if not actually to commit the error condemned in 2 Tim.ii.18". Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p.124.
 2. As Schnackenburg notes that Cyril of Alexandria, Chrysostom and others took it to mean. Schnackenburg himself does not agree, but takes the reference to be to Christ's resurrection: "In the act of baptism the baptized man enters upon fellowship with Christ, and in such a manner that he gains a participation in Christ's death and resurrection - as in His death, so also in His resurrection". Op. cit., p.37.

ection, then to say "of the resurrection we shall be" is clumsy and "we shall be raised" would read smoother; (c) other references to 'resurrection' (vv.4, 8) explicitly link Christ's resurrection and that of the believer. It is therefore reasonable to understand the reference similarly in this verse.

And if the linking between Christ's resurrection and the Christian's is implied in this verse, then once more Paul is uniting the experience of the Christian to that of Christ. Murray comments here: "The underlying thought is again the inseparable conjunction of Christ's death and resurrection, and the inference drawn from this conjunction is that if we are united with Christ in his death we must be also in his resurrection. Disjunction in our case is as impossible as disjunction in his." ¹. That the believer's situation should thus parallel Christ's arises out of the baptismal metaphor of v.3.

v.8 συνήσόμεν αὐτῷ. This is a σύν verb omitted earlier in order to deal with it now. Nevertheless all the earlier comments on such verbs apply here too, and because of this we already have a reinforcing of the v.3 metaphor. In this instance it is not so much the resurrection which is being spoken of but the future state of believers. There seems to be a progression of thought: death with Christ, resurrection

1. Murray, op. cit., p.218.

with Christ, life with Christ. The $\epsilon\iota\ \gamma\alpha\rho$ of v.5 suggests that the 'resurrection' is in a sense dependent on a prior 'death'. Here the $\epsilon\iota\ \delta\epsilon$ does a similar job with regard to 'life with Christ', the latter being dependent on also previously having died with him. Certainly for Paul the death of Christ had real effects - in this passage he mentions the destruction of the sinful body and the freeing from sin's mastery (vv.6-7). Such effects are prerequisites of resurrection and future life. Were there no 'death' there could be no destruction of the sinful body, no freeing from sin, and consequently no resurrection and life. These last do depend on 'death' - that is, of course, on Christ's death and the believer's union with him in his death, that union coming about in baptism. But it is not as if there is union with Christ in death only, and then, because the 'death' has occurred, the others follow automatically. The $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\ \dots\ \alpha\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega$ formula here shows that the union is completely with all that Christ is and has done, and therefore is not only with his death but also his resurrection and his on-going life. At this point Paul is once more basing his statements on the metaphor of baptism, and in doing so showing the extent of the immersion of the believer into Christ.

v.11 $\text{ὡς τε, δὲ τῷ Θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.}$

Just as the future resurrection in v.5 was also related, and made relevant, to the present by the Hebraism 'we too might walk in newness of life' in v.4, so here the

future life with Christ of v.8 is related similarly to the present for the believer. This being 'alive to God' of v.11 is based on the fact that Christ 'lives to God' (v.10). The οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς at the beginning of v.11 is the linking phrase. What is true of Jesus is true for the believer (so they are to consider - λογίζεσθε) because by baptism the two have been joined. Paul makes it quite clear that this is his train of thought by adding the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.¹ As Sanday and Headlam say: "This phrase is the summary expression of the doctrine which underlies the whole of this section...".² Paul could have ended his sentence quite comfortably after Θεῷ. The addition of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ suggests that 'in Christ' is now the sphere of the Christian's life, a sphere entered through baptism according to the v.3 metaphor.

Leaving these references to resurrection now, some have found a very strong link between Christ and the believer in v.5a, especially because of σύμφυτοι. The word means 'born with one', 'congenital', 'innate';³

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1. Vaughan makes sure he covers most possibilities of the meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ by defining it as: "included in Christ Jesus: united to Him, inserted into Him, invested with Him, incorporated in Him, built into Him, abiding in Him, hereafter to be found in Him". C.J. Vaughan, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (London: MacMillan & Co., 1874), p.123.
 2. Sanday and Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, p.160.
 3. Liddell and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, II, p.1689.

'cultivated', 'planted'; 1. 'planted together', 'born together with', 'of joint origin'. 2. Sanday and Headlam say the word exactly expresses the process by which a graft becomes united with the life of a tree. 3. That being so, a rendering of v.5a such as the RSV "we have been united with him in a death..." would then be very strong additional testimony to the closeness established in baptism according to the metaphor of v.3.

But v.5a more literally translated reads: "For if we have become united in/to the likeness of his death...". Its meaning is anything but clear. Many questions are left open for debate, and debated they are. Ought τῷ Χριστῷ to be supplied (as many modern translations allow)? 4. Sanday and Headlam understand

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1. J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1949), p.598.
 2. Grimm, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.597. Since this is the only NT occurrence of σύνφωτος, the lexicographers give specific meanings for this context - 'united' (Liddell and Scott, II, op. cit., p.1689); 'grown along with', 'united with' (Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p.598); 'grown together', 'united with' (Grimm, op. cit., p.598).
 3. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p.157. Schnackenburg would amend this slightly, refusing the idea of 'implanting' or 'growing in' in favour of 'growing together'. Op. cit., p.49. The difference is not vital for us.
 4. E.g., RSV, NEB, and Good News Bible all imagine it to be there. Cranfield neatly sums up arguments from both sides of this issue by saying that the presence of the σύν verbs in vv.4, 6, and 8 "provide considerable support for the view that αὐτῷ is to be supplied here, and τῷ ὁμοιώματι understood as instrumental or as a dative of respect. But the

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the sense of the verse to be that "the Christian becomes 'grafted into' Christ".¹ But Cranfield pointedly asks "whether there has not been a tendency among exegetes and theologians generally to read more into this verse than the language used in it really warrants",² and says that it is one thing to know that *σύμφυτος* means 'ingrafting' and another to assume that the meaning here is 'ingrafting into Christ'. Further contention revolves around what type of dative is contained in the phrase *τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ* - indirect object ('to'), locative ('in'), or instrumental ('by')? It is obvious that very divergent meanings can arise between the different options. And perhaps the biggest argument of all is over the meaning of 'likeness of his death'. Some see here a straight reference to baptism, some the 'death' to sin of the Christian, and others varying possibilities. This issue is the real one for the verse, for, if clarity can be obtained on this matter, then the others fall into place. The different options offered by the commentators are too involved to be discussed here, given that the outcome (whatever that should be) would not change the logic of the passage. Nevertheless, Bornkamm puts forward one view

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presence of *τῷ ὁμοιώματι* in close proximity to the *συν*-compound weighs heavily on the other side...".
Op. cit., p.307. (He favours the second argument.)

1. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p.157.

2. Cranfield, op. cit., p.307.

which is worthy of note.

He says ὁμοιώματι, as well as meaning 'copy' or 'imitation' can mean simply 'the same form', that is, "a designation of a form which is not only similar to the form of another but the same".¹ 'Likeness' thus represents the essence of the image portrayed, as is found at Rom.8:3 (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας) and Phil.2:7 (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). Bornkamm says: "They clearly show that 'likeness' characterizes a concretum, not the abstract property of similarity or sameness."² So 'the likeness of his death' characterizes the death of Christ, and does not refer at all to baptism.³ Paul therefore is saying we have been σύμφυτοι to that which characterizes Christ's death. 'It is this death, Christ's, you have died,' says Paul. Had Paul's manuscript allowed for italics he would have used them for αὐτοῦ - his death; no other kind, and no other person's. It is on the basis of this, linked by τοῦτο γινώσκοντες, that Paul can use συνισταυρώθῃ in v.6. Because he is sure that Christ's death is the believer's death he carries on speaking of it and drawing further conclusions.

This interpretation gives us answers to our other problems: now the indirect object, 'to', becomes the

1. G. Bornkamm, Early Christian Experience, trans. P.L. Hammer (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969), p.77.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., note 19, pp.85-6.

most appropriate rendering of τῷ; and no occasion arises to insert τῷ Χριστῷ (which would only have been justifiable were it impossible to make any other sense).

By attaching σύμφυτοι to Christ's death and not directly to his person,¹ the force of the Christ-believer joining appears not to be as strong as it might. Nevertheless, even this meaning does reinforce the metaphor. The joining to Christ's death - an implication of the joining to his person - is strengthened. By strengthening the implication, then that which gives rise to it (the v.3 metaphor which speaks of the general 'union') is also strengthened.

Finally, a general look at the flow of the argument in these verses reveals that it totally depends on the 'immersion into Christ' metaphor. Paul's whole purpose, we saw earlier, is to state a particular ethical position. It is therefore useful to note how he draws his conclusions. Christ's death (vv.3, 8) is the Christian's death (vv.3, 8); Christ's burial (v.4) is the Christian's burial (v.4); Christ's new life/resurrection (vv.4, 5, 8) is or will be the Christian's new life/resurrection (vv.4, 5, 8); Christ's crucifixion (v.6) is the Christian's crucifixion (v.6); death no longer rules over Jesus (v.9) and thus no longer over the Christian (v.11); Christ has died to sin (v.10) and

1. By this we mean that σύμφυτοι relates to an event concerning Christ, and does not speak directly of an 'ingrafting into Christ' in the sense Sanday and Headlam took it.

so therefore has the Christian (v.11); Christ is alive toward God (v.10) and so is the Christian (v.11).

Consistently Paul unites the Christian to the events concerning Christ so that what is true of Christ is true of the Christian. Jowett says: "Throughout this passage the Apostle is identifying Christ and the believers; and conceptions, primarily applicable or more intelligible in reference to the one, are transferred to the other." ¹. And Schnackenburg says:

"...a typical Pauline principle must be made plain if we would understand the Apostle's characteristic way of speaking about being 'buried with Christ' and 'raised with' Him, of being 'crucified with Christ' and 'living with' Him: that which happened to Christ happens also to Christians; dying and rising with Him becomes a rule in the Christian life, which works itself out in all areas and in every aspect of life." ².

Burger sums the point up:

"Die Hoffnung, in der Auferstehung der verklärten Leiblichkeit des Herrn gleichgestaltet zu sein, ist darin begründet, dass der Christ schon jetzt in einer realen, geistleiblichen Gemeinschaft mit Christus lebt. Sie kommt zustande durch die Taufe. ...Wer getauft ist, der ist mit seinem ganzen Sein hineingenommen in Christus, so dass nun alles, was von Christus gesagt wird, auch vom Christen gesagt werden kann. "Wieviel euer auf Christum getauft sind, die haben Christum angezogen" (Gal.3,27). Dieses Angezogenhaben, Zusammengewachsen - und Verwurzelte sein (Röm.6,5; Kol.2,7) ist ein reales Hineinversetztsein in die Wirklichkeit des gestorbenen und auferstandenen Christus, so dass nun das ganze Leben des Christen ein Leben in Christus ist, ein ständiges Mitsterben und

1. B. Jowett, The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians and Romans (London: John Murray, 1894), p.292.

2. Schnackenburg, op. cit., pp.156-7.

Mitleben (2 Kor.4,10f.)." 1.

This is not the mere drawing of parallels - this is no analogy between Christ and the Christian. It is not that Christ has done one set of actions and the Christian another and the two can be compared. Only Christ has acted - the Christian has done nothing, except that by being baptized he has been 'immersed into Christ' and so shares in all that is true of Christ. This is not to say that the Christian is intended to stand around forever idle. Paul's purpose in writing was that Christians should know what to do, or, more accurately, how to do it. Ethical demands follow as implications of being immersed into Christ and therefore being dead to sin. But the logic of the whole passage hangs on the v.3 metaphor.

The consequence of this is that the justification of the metaphorical interpretation of *ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* does not rest just on the phrase in v.3. At the end of the day the metaphor does not depend simply on these words. For we have in this passage a metaphorical context, ² a context which testifies to a merging of Christ and the believer. Such 'union' forms the backdrop to the stage and thus necessitates that what is being enacted, referred to, in these words is a metaphor which speaks of union with Christ. The

1. E. Burger, Der Lebendige Christus (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), p.53.

2. See above, pp.99ff.

context governs the understanding of the phrase βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν. The latter's metaphorical meaning must conform to that associated with the former. In this case that is not difficult for the most natural picture evoked by βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν is in harmony with the background context. They support each other. Had there been a contrast between the two then we should rightly have been suspicious of our understanding of at least one. But when harmony is found, a fair degree of confidence regarding the interpretation is justifiable.

Our attention must now turn to objections to this metaphorical interpretation of Rom.6:3. For, certainly, not all understand the passage this way. Oepke, for example, says: "The idea of a mystically understood medium of baptism ('to be immersed in Christ etc.') is always and in every respect wide of the mark." ¹. Similarly, Beasley-Murray argues that in the phrase βαπτίζειν εἰς there is no intention of affirming "spiritual unity". ².

One objection, made by several, is that even with εἰς, βαπτίζω is a technical term for baptizing in

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1. A. Oepke, art. βάπτω, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed., G. Kittel, I (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p.539. He says later: "This does not mean that we are to deny pneumatic union with the crucified and risen Christ. It means that this is not basic to the expression βαπτίζειν εἰς; it is not, therefore, its primary implication." Op. cit., p.540.
 2. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.129.

water.¹ But we have already shown that a meaning beyond a literal reference to the act of baptism is demanded because of the addition of a qualifier.² And, in any case, the fact of the matter is that this verb has a much wider use, both in the New Testament and elsewhere: (i) it is used by Josephus when he refers to the crowds who flocked into Jerusalem at the time of the siege, *ἐβάπτισαν τὴν πόλιν*.³ We also hear of being immersed in sleep, *βαπτίσω τινὰ ὕπνῳ*, and being 'over head and ears (in debt)', *ὀφλήμασι βεβαπτισμένοι*.⁴ These examples lack the claimed technical sense for *βαπτίσω*; (ii) Beasley-Murray, one of the objectors, is surely forgetful of his own comments on Mk.10:38//Lk.12:50 (which contain *βαπτίσω*):

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1. See Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, fn., p.129; Oepke, art. *βάπτω*, *TDNT*, I, p.539; F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, trans., A. Cusin, I (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880), p.405. Schnackenburg argues along similar lines that in the NT the meaning of *βαπτίζειν* has been "worn down" into the technical sense of 'baptize' while for 'immerse' *βάπτειν* is used (Lk.16:24; Jn.13:26; Rev.19:13). *Op. cit.*, p.22. Likewise, Käsemann says: "*βαπτίζειν* already has a technical sense. It is at least questionable whether it still carries the sense 'to dip,' 'to immerse.'" Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, p.164.
 2. See above, pp.125ff.
 3. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 4.3.3 (in Liddell and Scott, I, *op. cit.*, p.305).
 4. *Anthologia Graeca* 11.49 and Plutarchus, *Galb.*21, respectively (in Liddell and Scott, I, *op. cit.*, p.305). Interestingly considering his objection, Oepke also lists a considerable number of further such uses of *βαπτίσω*. See art. *βάπτω*, *TDNT*, I, p.530.

"(Jesus) is to be plunged, not into water but into calamity unto death".¹ What has happened to this 'technical' sense here? And we might ask the same question with respect to references to being baptized in the Spirit. One example would be Mt.3:11 (and parallels) where βαπτίσω ἐν ὕδατι is compared (and some think contrasted) with the future βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. These references show that βαπτίσω continued in the New Testament and elsewhere to be used in its widest sense as well as referring to the Christian rite of baptism.

Another argument put forward against understanding ἐμβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν as 'immersion into Christ Jesus' is that εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν = εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Beasley-Murray sees the two expressions as parallel and therefore to be understood to mean the same, and that is 'with respect to' Jesus Christ.² Cranfield concurs with this view, calling the two phrases "synonymous".³ Of course, objectors to the metaphorical interpretation are obliged to find some alternative such as this. However, they

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.72.

2. Ibid., p.129. (His fuller explanation of εἰς τὸ ὄνομα is in pp.90ff.) He calls this "a vaguer meaning"! Op. cit., p.130.

3. Cranfield, op. cit., p.301. Barrett also thinks the two phrases mean the same, that being: "Those who are baptized into the name of Christ become Christ's men...". Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p.122.

tread on dangerous ground for the following reasons:

(i) obviously Paul chose to say εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν and not εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, etc.; (ii) the εἰς τὸ ὄνομα formula may be commonly associated elsewhere with baptism (e.g., in Acts) but it certainly is not a distinctively Pauline phrase in this context, and therefore we have no right to read it in. In fact, there is only one baptismal passage in which it is used by Paul, and even then it is only implied (1 Cor.1:13, 15). It could, of course, be argued that εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν is Paul's shorthand version of the longer phrase εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.¹ If that were done we should still be no further forward, for several reasons. One is that such an awareness would be ours, people who have the benefit of a wider knowledge of Paul's writings and the rest of the New Testament. There can be no justification for assuming that the Roman Christians would be aware that this phrase was any such abbreviation, and we must presume they understood it in the form here. Again, Bouttier points out that there is a variety of preposition used with the 'name formula' when speaking of baptism. He continues: "Si 'baptiser εἰς Χριστόν' était une simple contraction, on devrait trouver aussi

1. Precisely Beasley-Murray's point. He calls it "a simplifying abbreviation". Op. cit., p.129 (see also p.147). Barrett similarly calls it "an abbreviated form" of the fuller phrase. Op. cit., p.122.

baptiser ἐπὶ οὐ ἐν Χριστῷ".¹ Another reason is that even if it were true that εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν were a shorthand version of εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, some adequate interpretation of the latter must still be given.² Beasley-Murray's rendering 'with respect to' is far too vague, to the point of being almost meaningless. It cannot be assumed that when used with reference to a person the phrase lacks a similar metaphorical meaning as we have seen in βαπτίσω εἰς Χριστὸν.

Best is aware of the argument that what we have here in Rom.6 is an abbreviated form of the longer phrase. He says:

"It is very difficult to assess the value of this argument but it may possibly be supported by saying that in the Old Testament Yahweh and the name of Yahweh are regarded as equivalent; therefore baptism into Christ is the same as baptism into the name of Christ. Actually this argument works the wrong way; the name of Yahweh stands for and means Yahweh; baptism in the name of Christ should therefore stand for and mean baptism into Christ; this would therefore explain baptism in the name of Christ by baptism into Christ, which is exactly the opposite of what it is required to do."³

(iii) because εἰς really means 'into' in the epistles this phrase εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν cannot mean 'with respect to Christ Jesus'.⁴ The interpretation is

1. Bouttier, En Christ, p.37.

2. For discussion of this, see the later chapter on 1 Cor.1:13.

3. Best, One Body in Christ, p.71.

4. Dunn says that the parallel βαπτίσω εἰς in v.3b cannot be taken as βαπτίσω εἰς τὸ ὄνομα and criticizes Beasley-Murray's rendering there 'with reference to his death' and Schnackenburg's 'in the' (Contd.)

biased away from any such 'softened' meaning and much more towards a metaphorical merging with Christ.

Beasley-Murray brings a further objection. He refers to a statement by Best that εἰς has a "social and local meaning",¹ but argues against this on the grounds that the parallel εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν of 1 Cor. 10:2 "can scarcely be said to mean 'into Moses'".² Schnackenburg, referring to the same passage, says that in it "the local significance (of εἰς) would be an absurdity" and that must guard our meaning here.³ Similarly Black declares that in 1 Cor. 10 "... 'to be baptized into Moses' cannot mean 'mystical union' of the Israelite with Moses".⁴ However, the following deserve mention: (i) not all share such reservations in interpreting εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν, for example, Grosheide says: "To baptize unto Moses means to immerse in Moses...";⁵ (ii) it is commonly agreed among

Contd.)

direction of his death' as "quite inadequate". He goes on: "Paul obviously means much more than that". Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.141.

1. Best, op. cit., p.69. Best in fact makes the comment in the context of a discussion of Gal. 3:27 and its relation to vv. 26 and 28. For fuller quotation, see below, p.183.
2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.128.
3. Schnackenburg, op. cit., pp.22-3.
4. Black, Romans, p.94.
5. F.W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p.220.

commentators that the phrase εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν is derived from εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. Beasley-Murray accepts this and warns that εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν can only be understood from εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.¹ He and others, therefore, would appear to be quite unjustified in reversing this principle of interpretation and qualifying the meaning of εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν from εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν.²

Oepke is also guilty of qualifying his meaning in Rom.6 from 1 Cor.10. But his objection still merits notice, and that is that baptism into Moses would clash with a "second spatial indication" in 1 Cor.10:2, ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ.³ But we have already noted that "Paul is not prone to confuse εἰς and ἐν"⁴ as Turner puts it, and therefore denotes a difference between εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν and ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ. The former describes the nature, or even the goal, of that baptism while the latter describes the circumstance, the location, of it. Had Paul been describing the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch he might have said that he was baptized into Christ in the pond. The 'into' is part of the description of the meaning of

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.185.

2. For discussion of this at more length, see the later chapter on 1 Cor.10:2.

3. Oepke, art. βάπτω, TDNT, I, p.539.

4. Turner, J.H. Moulton's A Grammar of New Testament Greek, p.256.

that baptism while the 'in' simply gives the location. ^{1.}
 There need be no clash of spatial concepts in 1 Cor.10
 to warn us of any error in interpretation here.

A further strong line of argument from commentators on Rom.6 is that the focus of Paul's attention, as he speaks of baptism, is on the death of Christ. The words *ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* in v.3 very quickly give way to *εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν*. Therefore the central thought is not a joining to the person of Christ but an involvement of the Christian in the death of Christ. Cranfield says: "Christian baptism is essentially baptism into Christ's death." ^{2.} White comments: "...Paul's interpretation of baptism is mainly concerned with the death-resurrection metaphor...". ^{3.} Nygren's view is similar: "The central thought for Paul, when he speaks of baptism, is thus the participation of the baptized in the death and resurrection of Christ." ^{4.} And Evans says: "...the Christian life begins with baptism which is an experience of His death...". ^{5.} Given these statements,

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1. A more mundane and non-metaphorical example of the same thing would be the sentence: 'We got into the train in Edinburgh'.
 2. Cranfield, op. cit., p.303.
 3. R.E.O. White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1960), p.201.
 4. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p.236.
 5. E. Evans, To the Romans (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1948), p.132.

then, ought we not accordingly to concentrate on a death metaphor? Is Paul not now coming to the point of baptism? Well, Paul is coming to the point, but we must remember what was said at the outset, that his point is not baptism but the question of why we should sin no more. In this passage as a whole Paul is not giving an exposition of the meaning of baptism. Rather he is seeking to deal with an ethical/theological problem. Yes, death (and then walking ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς) is the point of the passage but that is not to say it is the point of baptism.

Paul's purpose is to justify his statement in v.2: οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ἢ ἵσμεν ἐν αὐτῇ; His thought in so quickly mentioning Christ's death is really quite simple, as we outlined earlier. We are united with Christ in our baptism. That means we are not only united to Christ's person but also his acts. Among those is his death. What may be said of Christ may be said of those joined to him. The believer has been 'immersed into Christ Jesus'. Since Christ has died, so has such a believer. And that a Christian has died is Paul's vital point. But, all through, the argument depends on the concept of 'immersion into Christ' - that baptismal metaphor remains dominant.

Sanday and Headlam say: "This conception lies at the root of the whole passage. All the consequences which St. Paul draws follow from this union, incor-

poration, identification of the Christian with Christ." 1.

Clark puts it this way: "Baptism is not in the last resort baptism into the death of Christ but baptism into Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Redeemer". 2. Murray sums the whole matter up by saying that the union in baptism allows the believer to participate in all the privileges Christ embodies. He goes on:

"If baptism signifies union with Christ, it must mean union with him in all that he is and in all phases of his work as the Mediator. Christ Jesus cannot be contemplated apart from his work nor his work apart from him. Neither can one phase of his redemptive accomplishment be separated from another. Therefore union with Christ, which baptism signifies, means union with him in his death. ...Baptism into Christ must carry this implication. Hereby is vindicated the apostle's premise, and it is vindicated by drawing out the implications of that baptism which believers at Rome prized and cherished. For if baptism means union with Christ Jesus in his death, then believers died with Christ in his death. This is not only vindication; it is also elucidation of the proposition that believers died to sin. It is, however, only the first step in that elucidation; the succeeding verses are relied on for fuller explication." 3.

Thus, contrary to many interpretations, we find that immersion into Christ's death is not the nature of baptism for Paul, but rather the relevant implication or consequence for his argument here of his primary thought about baptism, that it is immersion into Christ.

1. Sanday and Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans, p.156.

2. N. Clark, An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1956), p.31.

3. Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, pp.214-5.

One last matter must now occupy us, and it is not so much an objection as a problem in interpreting the 'immersion into Christ' metaphor. For, if we leave completely to one side all those who refuse the metaphor at all, we might imagine a high degree of harmony among those who recognise it (even if most would not be aware that they are dealing with a metaphor). Yet this is not what is found. The problem revolves around how the relationship of the baptized believer and Christ is to be thought of and described. (Partly this is the same kind of problem as we found with the ἐν Χριστῷ formula.)

The terms employed are numerous: some speak of being 'united with Christ', others of being 'incorporated into Christ', and still more of being 'incorporated into the Body of Christ'. While one will speak of the relationship as 'Christ-mysticism', another prefers 'organic union', another 'solidarity', and another 'corporate personality'. Some will say Christ is the 'Head and inclusive Representative', others that he is the 'second Adam' and yet more that he is the 'head of a new humanity'. And, lest the unwary be trapped into thinking many of these terms all mean much the same, the various protagonists will quickly dispel that notion. For example, Dodd points out that while the idea of 'corporate personality' "is no doubt rightly called mystical...it is mystical with a

difference"; ¹. Nygren declares "there is not even a trace of mysticism" but prefers to speak of "organic unity"; ². and Beasley-Murray, following a useful discussion of varying views actually concludes that Paul held to a "double solidarity of Christ with man". ³.

It would seem a hopeless quest to sift through all the varying views in search of the definitive answer to the nature of the relationship of the believer to Christ spoken of in this passage. In fact, not only would it be a hopeless quest but a wrong quest.

We are dealing with a metaphor. It must be stressed once more that all that a metaphor can give us is a glimpse and certainly not a blueprint. ⁴. We can have no other than metaphorical precision. What so many of these authors, with their conflicting terms, are trying to do is pin down the meaning with a precision appropriate only to literal language.

Caird makes the point that it is a common error to think that imagery must be capable of visualisation. It may be, but not always. He continues:

"When John tells us that the heavenly Jerusalem is a perfect cube, fifteen hundred miles in length,

1. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p.88.

2. Nygren, op. cit., p.237.

3. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.137. One aspect of the solidarity is with all men by Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection for all. The other is with the Church by virtue of grace and faith.

4. See above, pp.84f.

breadth and height, and that it is constructed of pure gold, transparent like crystal, he obviously does not expect us to visualise it, but is setting out to overwhelm the imagination. Even when a comparison calls up a simple, clearly defined mental picture, it does not follow that the intended comparison is a visual one." 1.

Because what many of these commentators are trying to do with the metaphor of 'immersion into Christ' is to visualise it completely, their efforts are doomed to conflict, and, indeed, to failure because it is the wrong task. In the attempt to have a literal type precision, they are (as it were) filling in the blanks in the pictures for themselves. Naturally, one fills a blank with one idea, one word, and another with something different. Then they proceed to argue over that difference. And the task must in any case fail because none of those who do this have the necessary knowledge to fill in the 'gaps'. They are doing more than Paul did. That might be justifiable were this metaphor of the type used only for illustration, emphasis or variety, and we could know and speak of the matter in other terms. But this is depth language, and there is no other access to the reality of the relationship to Christ other than by metaphor. Any attempt, then, to use literal precision is to mix the two levels of language, literal and metaphorical. To use literal thinking in the context of metaphorical language is bound to lead the meaning astray. It is a quite

1. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.149.

inappropriate exercise. 1.

This is the language of connotation and not denotation. The result of a serious attempt to denote the meaning is that a great deal of time and energy is wasted while all the time the connotative interpretation is missed. Best seems to realise something of this when, speaking more particularly of the phrase 'Body of Christ' than of our passage here, he says:

"The Body of Christ is in some way Christ himself and the members of his Body are in some way his members. Perhaps the truth can be stated no more exactly than that; the conception of corporate personality cannot be reduced to logical terms, and that is why Paul rationalizes it into metaphors - 'in Christ', 'dead and risen with Christ', 'Body of Christ'." 2.

When Paul wrote ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν he never intended to give a measured, structured account of the amount and type of involvement of the believer in Christ through baptism. How could he have given such an account? That is not a matter which can be spoken of in literal language. Instead he used the one tool which could say something and that was a metaphor.

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1. See further the comments on the 'crudity' of the language in 1 Cor.12:13, below, pp.313ff.
 2. Best, op. cit., p.111. Something of what Skelton says of poetry could also be applicable here: "Those critics who concentrate upon exegesis, who spend pages analysing the message, the content of the poem, as if the poet were engaged in deliberately obscuring a thought, are not studying poetry at all. They are studying, perhaps, the history of ideas, or sociology, or even social anthropology, but not poetry." Skelton, Poetic Truth, p.77.

Certainly at the end of the day we are still left to ponder exactly what he meant. (Perhaps at the end of his day Paul still pondered too, forever striving to reach new depths of understanding.) But at least in the picture of a believer being 'immersed in Christ' in baptism we are able to glimpse something of the truth which leads on to justify Paul's statement that a Christian is dead to sin.

CHAPTER V

GALATIANS 3:27

Fundamentally the answers to two questions unlock the door of understanding regarding Paul's meaning in this verse. The first question is: 'Why did Paul mention baptism at all?' And the second question is: 'Given that he does mention baptism, why speak of it in precisely this way?'

Both questions certainly deserve an airing. For the reference to baptism appears, as it were, from nowhere in the middle of a discourse on law and faith. Then it disappears again with no apparent development of the baptismal thought. And v.27 is no 'straight-forward' mention of baptism. Paul does not simply say *οὐκ ἔβαπτισθητε*. Rather, he employs language which, at the very least, is picturesque, and perhaps contains in itself profound meanings.

The answer to our first question can come only through a study of the general course of Paul's thought in this chapter. The nature of the opposition from 'Judaizers' which Paul faces is well known, even if much of their case has to be deduced from Paul's answers to them. A great deal of the argument centres on the necessity or otherwise of works of the law (3:2, 5). Paul builds his case on the sufficiency, instead, of faith, and, as he does in his Romans epistle, harks back

to the Genesis account of Abraham. So, here, vv.6-7 form the first foundation stone to Paul's argument in this chapter. Commenting on v.7, Ridderbos says:

"The conclusion which Paul draws in this verse from Genesis 15 is presented to his readers as something plain and irrefutable, and as one which they must now once and for all make their own. This conclusion concerns the question, Who are children of Abraham? It may be that the Judaizers had also operated with this question. After all, the promise was to Abraham's seed (Gen.17:7). Paul points out that this descent from Abraham is not determined by physical descent, nor by circumcision, but by spiritual kinship with Abraham. What matters is the inner oneness." 1.

It is by faith, Paul says, that men are the sons of Abraham (v.7) and are blessed by God (v.9).

Paul feels he needs to press his argument further, however. Presumably thus far was enough for his Roman readers but the Galatians need a more developed case.

He proceeds to show the futility of trying to be saved by the law: a) because failure to keep any point of the law is enough to incur God's curse (v.10); b) because the Scripture says that the way to life is by faith (v.11). Of course all men, having failed to keep the law perfectly, are under the curse but, and here Paul brings Christ into this train of thought, that curse Christ took away from men and on to himself (v.13). He hung on a tree, thus incurring the curse of God. 2.

1. H.N. Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia, trans., H. Zylstra (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1961), p.119.

2. Some commentators make much of the fact that the Deut.21:23 reference to the curse upon a hanged man did not, of course, envisage a crucified man. Paul
(Contd.)

This taking of God's curse ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν allows all men to experience Abraham's blessing, and this comes ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (v.14).

At this point Paul's argument spirals upwards as he develops it still further. It hinges on the fact of a non-annullable promise made to Abraham and τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, and not τοῦ σπέρματιν (v.16). Allan comments here: "This verse is a digression" ¹. but it is not. Rather it is central and, as Ridderbos notes, is an intrinsic part of the argument leading up to the conclusion in v.29. ².

Once more commentators find much to say regarding the accuracy of Paul's deductions, pointing out that the word σπέρμα can be used collectively in exactly the same way as the English word 'seed'. But our sense of 'accuracy' should not be forced upon Paul, as Barclay rightly points out:

"When we read a passage like this...we have always to remember that Paul was a trained Rabbi; he was an expert in the scholastic methods of the Rabbinic academies. He could, and did, use their methods of argument, which would be completely cogent and convincing to a Jew, however difficult they may be for us to follow and to understand." ³.

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would not comprehend such quibbling. See further comments on v.16.

1. J.A. Allan, Galatians (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1951), p.65.
2. Ridderbos, op. cit., pp.132-3.
3. W. Barclay, The Letter to the Galatians (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1954), p.29. Neil also makes
(Contd.)

Paul, for the purposes of this argument, highlights the use of the singular as denoting, as Neil puts it, "the descendant par excellence, namely the Messiah".^{1.}

Guthrie says: "Grammar was but indirectly supporting a truth which had already dawned on the apostle as the real essence of the promise."^{2.} The promise made to Abraham was also made to his seed and that is to Christ.^{3.}

In the next two verses Paul stresses the permanence and the legitimacy of the promise of the inheritance. Then, in some difficult verses (19-20), he speaks of the role of the law in terms he develops in v.23.

In vv.21-22 Paul neatly shows the positive side of the role of the law by giving it a place in God's plan, a place which leaves the fulfilment of the promise to faith in Christ. This thought he amplifies in vv.23-24,

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a useful comment: "This may seem to us to be curious and far-fetched reasoning, more appropriate to the scholastic disputations which had been part of Paul's early training as a rabbi. But, after all, it was people with that type of mind who were upsetting the Galatian converts and who had to be fought with their own weapons." W. Neil, The Letter of Paul to the Galatians (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p.56.

1. Neil, op. cit., p.56.

2. D. Guthrie, Galatians (London: Thos. Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1969), p.106.

3. Paul is quite capable of referring to God's promise without making this fine distinction between singular and plural - see Rom.4:16f.; 9:4ff. That he makes the point here is to suit his argument.

calling the law a παιδαγωγός, the slave in Greek households who acted as a companion and watched over boys aged from seven to seventeen. Verse 23 says that the law had that role until a time when faith should be revealed, and v.24 identifies that as the time of Christ, the time when faith took over.

This allows Paul to assert (v.25) that the law's role as custodian is finished, and (v.26) with their faith believers are now sons of God.¹ Paul's precise words in v.26 are: Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἴστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. There is an ambiguity centering on ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. It can either be rendered, as the RSV, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith". Or it can be treated as being governed by τῆς πίστεως, and phrased "through faith in Christ Jesus". Commentators divide over the matter. Those who are like-minded with the translators of the RSV often highlight the next verses and use that as a guide for this verse. On that basis especially, Burton

1. Betz drives something of a wedge between vv.25 and 26, noting the change in 'person', and commenting: "Following the discussion of the situation of the Jewish Christians which is concluded in 3:25, 3:26-28 turns to the Gentile Christians and defines their status before God. This is the goal toward which Paul has been driving all along." H.D. Betz, Galatians (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p.181 (see also p.185). He is perhaps a little rigid, especially in the assertion that the discussion of the situation of the Jewish Christians is "concluded" in v.25. Is none of what follows relevant to them? Was none of what precedes relevant to the Gentile Christians? Rather it would seem that the thought is widened to include the Gentiles more especially, but without any loss of reference to Jewish Christians.

says ἐν "...has here its metaphorical spatial sense, marking Christ as one in whom the believers live, with whom they are in fellowship".¹ Lightfoot says the words ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "...are thrown to the end of the sentence so as to form in a manner a distinct proposition, on which the Apostle enlarges in the following verses: 'You are sons by your union with, your existence in Christ Jesus'".² But many are otherwise minded, Eadie and Lagrange stating that to separate off ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is against the natural order of the words.³ And Ellicott also takes this preference because of parallels in Eph.1:15 and Col.1:14, because of its grammatical accuracy, and because of what he calls the "peculiar force" of ἐν with πίστις and πιστεύω.⁴

While the point has a certain importance, it is not vital to be sure in order to proceed. The 'faith' of v.26 is certainly in Christ Jesus anyway, whether or not the words run together, and the idea of a close, intimate relationship between Christ and the believer is certainly about to follow in the subsequent verses. If the "in

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1. E.D. Burton, The Epistle to the Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), pp.202-3.
 2. J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1902), p.149.
 3. J. Eadie, The Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), pp.284-5; M.-J. Lagrange, Saint Paul Épitre aux Galates (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1950), p.92.
 4. C.J. Ellicott, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854), p.56.

Christ" rendering is there in v.26, then it simply serves to reinforce what now follows in v.27.

Paul has just said: 'You are all sons of God through faith'. How is this true? How did it come about? The answer comes (v.27): ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. Paul says: 'You became sons of God in Christ Jesus when you 'put on' Christ, and you put on Christ when you were baptized.' More so than in v.26, the γὰρ of v.27 shows Paul is about to explain his previous statement. Eadie says it "confirms, and at the same time explains, the statement of the previous verse".¹

The faith (v.26) which the converts have found led them to baptism in which they were clothed with Christ (v.27), and that made them sons of God (v.26) and, as we shall see, also sons of Abraham (v.29).

So Lagrange says: "Le v.26 affirmait que les chrétiens sont fils de Dieu par la foi, et le v.27 le prouvait par leur union au Christ, le vrai Fils de Dieu."² And Allan writes: "Faith, expressed and confirmed in baptism, incorporates the believer into Christ, and thus the believer comes to share Christ's

1. Eadie, op. cit., p.285. Lightfoot concurs with this view, op. cit., p.149, and Oepke says of v.27: "...begründet den ganzen v26...und bereitet v28 vor". A. Oepke, Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957), pp.88-9.

2. Lagrange, op. cit., p.93.

sonship." ¹. Burton is succinct: "'To put on Christ' is to become as Christ, to have his standing...". ². And it is the implications of gaining Christ's standing which are vital for Paul's whole logic in this passage. Gaining Christ's standing is how men become sons of God. That is how men become seed of Abraham.

Schneider says:

"(Paul) shows apropos of baptism that this sacrament unites men so closely to Christ that one can really say that they are "in Christ Jesus" (3:26), that they are "one person in Christ Jesus" (3:28). But if the baptized "belong to Christ" so closely, then what is true of Christ is also true of them. They are seed of Abraham. They inherit the promise which was made to Abraham and his descendants." ³.

So all who are baptized are now ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and are εἰς in him (v.28). Those who have been baptized now have this new standing, a standing which allows Paul to pass a conclusion regarding their national, social, and sexual situation. Betz says:

"The three statements, extremely concise as they are, name the old status of the baptized and declare this old status abolished. By implication a new status is claimed, but no further explanation is given at this point. It is significant that Paul makes these statements not as utopian ideals or

1. Allan, op. cit., p.68.

2. Burton, op. cit., p.203.

3. G. Schneider, The Epistle to the Galatians, trans., K. Smyth (London: Burns & Oates Ltd., 1969), p.74. Schnackenburg makes the point neatly: "The fact that in baptism we 'put on Christ' brings us into so close a unity with Him, we become through Him participators in the blessing promised to Abraham (Gal.iii.27; cf.29)". Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.107.

as ethical demands, but as accomplished facts." 1.

But there is a reason for that new status. It is because of the new relation to Christ, spoken of in the previous verse. Guthrie says:

"The full force of the masculine gender of heis (one) should be retained, for the idea is not of a unified organization, but of a unified personality. ...The words 'in Christ Jesus' connect with the same phrase in verse 26. The unity spoken of here is essentially a spiritual unity, inseparably connected with the believer's personal position in Christ." 2.

This takes Paul to v.29, a statement which rings out as a triumphant conclusion. We can almost hear him say: 'You do not have to be circumcised to be Abraham's offspring, to inherit God's promise. If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.' 3.

The argument he began to build in v.7, grounded in

1. Betz, op. cit., p.189.

2. Guthrie, op. cit., p.116. Cole also sees the use of the masculine rather than the neuter as no accident: "Paul is going to apply to the collective whole of the Christian Church that which he has previously predicated of Christ in person - the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise". R.A. Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians (London: The Tyndale Press, 1965), p.111.

3. Burton says: "The prize which the opponents of Paul had held before the eyes of the Galatians, and by which they hoped to persuade them to accept circumcision and become subjects of the law, was the privilege of becoming seed of Abraham, and so heirs of the promise to him and to his seed. This prize, the apostle now assures the Galatians, belongs to them by virtue of the fact that they are Christ's, as in v.7 he had said it belongs to those who are of faith." Op. cit., p.209.

v.16, has been worked out in vv.26-27 and concluded in v.29 with the desired answer. By faith men are baptized and so are united with Christ, the seed of Abraham. Thus men baptized into Christ are also seed of Abraham. Ellicott writes: "The declaration of verse 7 is now at length substantiated by twenty-two verses of the deepest, most varied, and most comprehensive reasoning that exists in the whole compass of the great Apostle's writing." ¹. Schneider sums the matter up:

"The baptized belong to Christ not merely by their profession of faith and their following of Christ but in his very being. ...The Apostle's argument has reached its goal. When scripture allotted the promises to the unique seed of Abraham (3:16) it meant Christ. But whoever belongs to Christ is incorporated in him, the seed of Abraham, and is himself seed of Abraham. If so, the promised inheritance also belongs to him, the whole blessing bestowed by God in Jesus Christ." ².

What this study of ch.3 as a whole has done is to set the stage for our look at the metaphors of v.27. We have found that v.27 is a key verse in the logic of the passage. And what that verse does is somehow to bring about a unity between Christ and the baptized believer. As Lightfoot puts it: "The argument turns on the entire identity of the Christian brotherhood with Christ." ³.

Our first question was: 'Why should Paul mention

1. Ellicott, op. cit., p.58.

2. Schneider, op. cit., p.76.

3. Lightfoot, op. cit., p.151.

baptism at all?' The answer, evidently, is that he does so because it is in baptism that he sees the necessary oneness of Christ and believer coming about. This sets the stage, therefore, on which the metaphors may play their part to make the scene even clearer. In studying them we may come to an understanding of why baptism is spoken of in the way it is, and why that should be was our second question.

Thus we now examine v.27 itself, seven words of profound significance: ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἑβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδώσαθε.

This verse has a great deal in common with Rom.6:3. Both have the introductory word ὅσοι; both have a βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστὸν formula; both contain two verbs in identical tenses; both contain nouns in the accusative case governed by εἰς; both are structured so that a second noun is set in apposition to the first. Where they mainly differ is that in Rom.6:3 the principle noun changes in the second half of the verse but the verb is repeated, while in Gal.3:27 the noun is retained but the verb changed.

Of the similarities the most striking is the recurrence of the βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστὸν formula. Arguably Paul could have omitted εἰς Χριστὸν. So why does he include it? There are two possible reasons. One is that it is Paul's accustomed reference to baptism, simply an automatic expression, perhaps based on a formula spoken at baptism. If so, it could be said that no special significance should be attached to the

εἰς Χριστὸν and the phrase treated as a 'straight', literal reference: 'as many of you as were baptized as Christians...'. However, there is no evidence for this. Paul nowhere else uses precisely these words, for even the Rom.6 reference phrases the words differently, ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. (Here he says, εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε.) Thus it is no rote expression of Paul's. And none of Paul's other references to baptism employ the formula - other than perhaps in 1 Cor.10:2 where, since it is used in connection with Moses, it does not appear to be tripped off the tongue as a phrase lifted directly from a baptismal service.

Blunt, while condemning this first option, offers us the second: "'Baptized into Christ' is a succinct statement of the aim of baptism rather than a reproduction of the formula employed in baptizing".¹ That aim is revealed because of the metaphor contained in the words εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε. Strictly speaking the metaphor is in the verb and is a metaphor of immersion. But of itself it is not obviously a metaphor. Only by attaching the qualifier εἰς Χριστὸν is the metaphor revealed. Had Paul spoken of immersion into water then the verb would be used literally, not metaphorically. But, rather, he spoke of immersion into Christ, which is an extraordinary use of immersion, an odd context for the verb, and is therefore to be taken

1. A.W.F. Blunt, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p.108.

metaphorically. The strangeness of the combination of βαπτίζω and εἰς Χριστόν shows that Paul is being metaphorical. The qualifier, as we noticed in Rom.6, also directs and limits the reader's thinking regarding the application of the metaphor. It is 'into Christ' that the baptized believer is immersed, that and that alone.

So, once again, we are to understand Paul as referring to baptism as 'immersion into Christ'. And thus it is that the NEB can render εἰς Χριστόν ἐβαπτίσθητε "Baptized into union with him...", and Cole says: "It is presumably the relationship summed up in the words 'in Christ'...to which Paul refers in the phrase baptized into Christ".¹ As if to explain Cole's comment, Best draws attention to the use of ἐν in vv.26 and 28, verses which describe the 'standing' of believers, and the use of εἰς in v.27. He says: "...the implied suggestion is that those who are 'in Christ' have come 'into him' by baptism, and that therefore εἰς must carry the social and local meaning of ἐν."² He compares this situation with Rom.6:3-4, pointing out that following an εἰς comes σύν and eventually ἐν. He concludes: "The contexts of the two passages in which εἰς Χριστόν occurs therefore suggest that we should interpret it with a social,

1. Cole, op. cit., p.109.

2. Best, One Body in Christ, p.69.

personal, and local meaning, and ally it with the formula *ἐν Χριστῷ*." ¹. Certainly, as we found in dealing with Rom.6, this is a possible connection.

So far all these matters applied also at Rom.6. Where this passage most differs is that it goes on to supply another metaphor - indeed, Paul mixes his metaphors.

He adds: *Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε*. The basic meaning of *ἐνδύω* is 'to put on' clothes. But it can also mean 'to enter', 'press into', or, even, 'to sink in'. ². This baptismal location is not the only New Testament occurrence of the word. Burton shows that when *ἐνδύεσθαι* has an impersonal object (e.g., 1 Thess.5:8; 1 Cor.15:53, 54; Rom.13:12; Col.3:12) it means 'to acquire', to make a part of one's character or possessions; when it has a personal object (as here, and Rom.13:14; Col.3:10) it signifies 'to take on the character or standing' of the person referred to, 'to become', or 'to become as'. ³. It is in this sort of sense that *ἐνδύεσθαι* is used by Dionysius Halicar: *τὸν Ταρκύνιον ἱκεῖνον ἐνδυσόμενοι*, 'playing the part of that Tarquinius', that is, standing in his shoes. ⁴.

1. Best, op. cit., p.69.

2. Liddell and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, I, p.562.

3. Burton, op. cit., p.204.

4. Antiq., 11.5, quoted in Ellicott, op. cit., p.57; Oepke, ...an die Galater, p.89; Lagrange, op. cit., p.92; Burton, op. cit., p.204; Best, op. cit., p.67; etc. Best and Oepke also quote Libanius, *ρίψας τὸν* (Contd.)

This leads Burton to make the comment we noted earlier, that 'to put on Christ' is to become as Christ, to have his standing.¹ Bring says: "The baptized person had become completely united with Christ and one with him."² Ellicott, citing the Tarquinius example, then goes so far as to say: "...it would appear that ἐνδύεσθαι τινά is a strong expression, denoting complete assumption of the nature, etc., of another. ...Thus ἐνδ. Χριστὸν implies a union with Christ of so true and so complete a nature, that we are brought εἰς μίαν συγγένειαν καὶ μίαν ἰδέαν (Chrys.) with Him."³ Some of these statements tend to make for a sense of uneasiness, as if Christ and the Christian are being completely identified. But, again, it needs to be said that metaphorical language, which this is, is

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στρατιώτην ἐνέδυ τὸν σοφιστήν, 'He laid aside the character of the soldier and put on that of the sophist'. Ep.968, Best, op. cit., p.67; Oepke, ...an die Galater, p.89.

1. See above, p.178.

2. R. Bring, Galatians (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p.181.

3. Ellicott, op. cit., p.57. Other commentators follow much the same track: Stevens talks of "this deep and close union with Christ". G.B. Stevens, Epistle to the Galatians (Conneticut: The Student Publishing Co., 1890), p.147. Mersch says: "Christ, then, becomes our environment and our atmosphere." Mersch, The Whole Christ, p.108. Luther puts it in his own inimitable way: "...the righteousness of the law, or of our own works, is not given unto us in baptism; but Christ himself is our garment". M. Luther, Epistle to the Galatians, E. Middleton's edn. (London: Wm. Tegg, 1860), p.278.

not given with a view to 'measurements of closeness' being drawn from it. Certainly such a strong expression as this implies an appropriately close relationship of the Christian to Christ. Any attempt, however, to spell out how close that is, in terms appropriate to literal language, is wrong and misleading.

One implication from the language which is justifiable, is that there are ethical consequences arising out of thinking of the Christian as either gaining the standing of Christ, or wearing Christ as a garment. Mersch says: "This supernatural clothing...demands of us a new manner of life. Our actions, our views, our sentiments must reproduce those of Christ."¹ This is not an aspect which is central to Paul's purpose at this point in the letter, although he most certainly has something to say on that subject later, especially in ch.5. (And, interestingly, the similar ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν in Rom.13:14 occurs in a context decidedly concerned with ethics.) But we read just shortly after our reference here that it is into the sons of God that the Spirit of Christ is sent (4:6), and the ethical demands are those which come because of the Spirit (5:16ff.). To be clothed with Christ must involve a new manner of life, one appropriate to Christ.

Some discussion arises among the commentators regarding the relationship between the two halves of

1. Mersch, op. cit., pp.108-9.

this verse. Eadie draws attention to the fact that both verbs are aorists and therefore "the two acts are marked as identical in point of time".¹ Dunn says the connection between the two parts of the verse "is so close that we must take the phrases as alternative and interchangeable expressions for the same reality: to be baptized into Christ is to put on Christ".² Beasley-Murray, however, does not agree: "We should not regard baptism to Christ (εἰς Χριστόν) as being identical with putting on Christ; rather the former act has the latter state as its effect".³

But such debates are unnecessary, and arise only from a failure to recognise the metaphorical structure in operation in this verse.

First we need to state the obvious, and that is that *Χριστόν ἐνεδύσασθε* is a metaphor. For once this is generally recognised. Dunn says it "is obviously a metaphor",⁴ and Schnackenburg that it is "a peculiar image that testifies to the real ability of the Apostle

1. Eadie, op. cit., p.286.

2. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.111. To be fair, however, he makes that point in protest against taking one half as referring to a physical act and the other as a metaphor. But, as we noted in dealing with Rom.6, language may certainly refer at one and the same time both to a literal event and, by the use of a metaphor, to its significance.

3. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.129.

4. Dunn, op. cit., p.109.

for picture thinking".¹ We should note here also, though, that *ἐνεδύσασθε* is only a metaphor because of the attachment to *Χριστὸν*. Had Paul somehow written: 'For as many of you as were baptized, afterward put on their clothes', he should still have used *ἐνεδύσασθε* but it would not have been a metaphor. Here, therefore, it is *Χριστὸν* which stretches the meaning of *ἐνεδύσασθε* until a metaphorical meaning is revealed. As we have seen before this is the function of a qualifier. Its job is also to channel the understanding of the metaphor. So the 'clothing', 'putting on', we are told, is in baptism of Christ – not of salvation, righteousness or any other possible term, such as those used with *ἐνδύω* at Col.3:12ff. (As indicated earlier, consequences like these may result from putting on Christ, but they are not significant for Paul at this moment in the way that gaining the standing of Christ is.) It is of a particular, close relationship with Christ in baptism that Paul speaks by this metaphor. That is the meaning on which attention is to be concentrated. For this metaphor, this use of *ἐνδύω*, the reader's attention is 'blinkered' by the qualifier, his vision made to rest on the word *Χριστός*.

That leads us to see, secondly, that in this verse are, therefore, two metaphors and two qualifiers. It is not immediately obvious that one metaphor is more dominant

1. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.136.

than the other. It might be said that the second metaphor 'qualifies' the first, that is, that *Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε* explains and amplifies the meaning of *εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε*. A better way of speaking of their relationship, however, would be to treat them as 'jostling' metaphors.

When we spoke of these earlier we saw that such an arrangement of metaphors had two main purposes. One was to aid clarity.¹ Some models work for some people but others need a different metaphor. We said before that different models are not necessarily saying different things, but rather may be complementary. Where one picture fails to 'work' for a reader, another may succeed. Caird says: "In the Bible...parallelism or the juxtaposition of images frequently helps us to locate the point of comparison."² Here the relationship to Christ spoken of by *ἐβαπτίσθητε* may be missed by some of the Galatians. In theory, Paul need never have written v.27b. But there were to be none who missed the point, and so a second metaphor is supplied.

The other main purpose of a second, jostling metaphor was to provide a means of control (not unlike the operation of a qualifier) on the first metaphor.³ TeSelle, we may recall, saw the jostling of metaphors

1. See above, pp.81-2.

2. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.150.

3. See above, pp.91ff.

as particularly necessary because of the imprecision of metaphors: "The risk and open-endedness means that many metaphors are necessary, metaphors which will support, balance, and illuminate each other".¹ That is what is happening here. The clothing metaphor gives the right 'colour' to the picture of being immersed in Christ. Paul wishes the Galatians to know that it is the associations which spring to mind from the idea of being 'covered' or 'clothed' by something which are to be the ones also applied to the idea of being immersed in that same thing. These are the commonplaces to be thought of with this metaphor - no more, no less. To some extent, then, Paul is editing the possible understandings of the βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστὸν metaphor. (We also noted previously that the attachment of a second metaphor heightens the sense of the importance of a particular matter. In this case the 'oneness' with Christ spoken of in this verse is of paramount importance for Paul's argument, and to highlight it may be another reason why Paul supplies the further metaphor.)

Therefore the meaning to be taken from this verse about baptism is one arrived at from the jostling of these metaphors. Commentators are generally agreed that Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε is an expression which "conveys a striking suggestion of the closeness which exists between Christ and the believer".² Ridderbos puts

1. See above, pp.92-3.

2. Guthrie, Galatians, p.115.

the two parts of the verse together: "Just as a garment which one puts on...quite envelops the person wearing it, and identifies his appearance and his life, so the person baptized in Christ is quite entirely taken up in Christ and in the salvation brought by Him".¹

Thus it is that the final meaning to be taken from v.27 involves two metaphors. They colour each other, the mixing producing its own desired shade of meaning. There is a reciprocity of illumination, each shedding light on the other, resulting in an intensity of combined force greater than either part. So here is a powerful statement, by means of these metaphors, of the closeness in baptism of Christ and the one baptized.

And it is because his aim was to show this that there is a different structure here from Rom.6:3. There Paul needed to show that the believer had 'died' with Christ. Thus he used βαπτίζω firstly to establish a close link with Christ's person, but then quickly moved on, changing the noun but retaining the metaphorical verb (βαπτίζω), to establish the same close link with Christ's death. He had to make that transition to fulfil his argument in the passage. But here in Galatians Paul's argument rests on the believer's 'identification' with Christ. This is what he must stress. Therefore he perpetuates the noun (Χριστός), but changes to another metaphorical verb which clarifies and

1. Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia, p.148.

reinforces the intimacy of the union with Christ.

At the beginning we asked why Paul mentioned baptism at all and, in particular, why he mentioned it this way. The answers are now clear. Baptism appears because it is in baptism that Paul saw that closeness of identity between Christ and believer come about, and he needs to demonstrate that closeness in this passage in order to show that simply by belonging to Christ and therefore without the law, the Christian is a child of Abraham. He speaks of baptism in the way he does because the careful interweaving of the metaphors gives a picture of that closeness, with just the right amount of precision and imprecision.

CHAPTER VI

COLOSSIANS 2:12

This is one of these rare passages where several commentators actually state that the writer is being metaphorical. Houlden says: "...in vv.11-13 he is using metaphorical language. He speaks of Christian baptism, and uses two different kinds of image to illuminate his meaning." ¹. Dunn, restricting himself to just vv.11-12, detects three metaphors in these verses. ².

These writers give us our first clues in examining this passage. Firstly, we certainly shall not be able to restrict ourselves to v.12 where the word βαπτίσματα occurs. That verse is in the middle of a sentence which begins at v.8 and does not properly finish until v.15. Its meaning, therefore, can only be deduced properly within the flow of that sentence. Secondly, because there is a general admission that the material is metaphorical, it consequently lacks the unequivocal precision of literal language, and we are likely to find widely varying interpretations from the commentators. Regarding vv.11-13, Martin states: "...all commentators

1. J.L. Houlden, Paul's Letters from Prison (London: Penguin Books, 1970), p.188.

2. See Dunn, op. cit., pp.153-5.

confess that it is an intricate passage." ^{1.} In fact it is more intricate than either Houlden or Dunn had warned us for in just vv.11-12 there are not two, nor three metaphors, but at least 12 words used in a way which differs from their normal, literal sense. Some of these are fairly straightforward such as ἀπεκδύσει, a common word for discarding clothes. Others are hardly noticed, such as Χριστοῦ, the anointed one, and may be becoming 'dead'. But, among these 12, ^{2.} three stand out as important for the line of argument. In vv.11-12 Paul ^{3.} says three things to these Colossians:

περιετμήθητε , συνταφέντες , and συνηγέρθητε. It is these verbs which carry the thought forward, and all are metaphors.

Of them συνταφέντες is the only one which has an unquestioned link with baptism. It is an aorist participle from συνβάπτω which also occurs in another baptismal context, Rom.6:4. The exact relation of συνηγέρθητε to baptism depends upon what reference the ἐν ᾧ of v.12b is seen to have. Does it mean 'in which' (thus referring back only to βαπτίσματι), or does it

1. R.P. Martin, Colossians (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1972), p.82.

2. The other ten are: ἐν, περιετμήθητε, περιτομῇ, σώματος, σαρκός, περιτομῇ, συνταφέντες, συνηγέρθητε, ἐνεργείας, ἡγέραντος.

3. The name 'Paul' is used with an awareness that not all are happy about attributing this letter to that person. However, at this point it is convenient for us to give the author the name stated in 1:1.

mean 'in whom' (technically going back to the reference to Christ in v.8, but occurring here in parallel with the ἐν ᾧ of v.11)? Only if the former is decided upon is it directly a baptismal metaphor. That issue, however, debated though it is, occupies but a fraction of the attention given to περιετμήθητε and its dependent clause ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The relation of περιετμήθητε to baptism has entirely to do with the interpretation of that metaphor.

Thus it may be seen that the understanding of this passage, and of the reference to baptism, is centred on three metaphors. Our task now is not only to look at each metaphor on its own. That is not enough, for we must also examine the interrelation of the metaphors (as we did in Gal.3:27). Three separate thirds of a jigsaw would give a very unsatisfactory picture - only when joined could there be a proper appreciation of that picture. Therefore we cannot simply study the metaphors individually but must work all the pieces together. Only by applying one of the features of metaphorical language we saw earlier is this possible. The key which unlocks this passage is a super-model.¹ We saw before that a metaphor could exist which functioned in an umbrella-like fashion, a less precise metaphor which encompassed in general terms the meaning of the indiv-

1. See above, pp.94ff.

idual metaphors over which it was set. In some instances that super-model would not even be specified in the passage, but yet be traceable as a background metaphor controlling the metaphors which do actually appear in the text.¹ What the super-model is here can be seen most clearly by showing it against Paul's line of argument in this passage.

What exactly the problem was which existed among the Colossians is not clear. Some liken it to the Galatian situation; others, such as Bruce, go as far as to call Paul's opposition an incipient form of gnosticism.² Flemington gives the heresy an ornate description as a "...partly Jewish, partly Oriental theosophy, with its hierarchy of spiritual orders and its insistence on "knowledge", asceticism and the observance of ceremonies...".³ Flemington goes on to state the generally accepted tenor of Paul's answer, that against this "...the Apostle maintains the complete sufficiency of Christ".⁴ Bruce gives the heading to the section 2:8-15: "Christ is all - and all you need".⁵

1. See above, pp.99ff.

2. See E.K. Simpson and F.F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1957), p.170. Bruce wrote the commentary on Colossians.

3. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p.61.

4. Ibid.

5. Simpson and Bruce, op. cit., p.228. Barclay sees
(Contd.)

To declare this is, then, Paul's intention. He does it first by several bold statements about the standing and 'qualifications' of Christ. The passage at 1:15-20 is famous and leads on to further such statements in ch.2, at v.3 and vv.9-10. In these few verses Paul claims that Christ images the invisible God, is the first-born of creation, is the agent, the goal and the controller of creation, the first-born from the dead, the one in whom all the fullness of God dwelt and dwells, the agent of reconciliation, the container of all wisdom and knowledge and the head of all rule and authority. By the time all that has been said there is little room for any rival! Thus Paul claims the sufficiency of Christ.

But he must, secondly, show how Christ is sufficient for them. This he does by associating the believer with Christ in an intimate relationship, employing especially the 'in Christ' formula. Right from the outset of the letter, Paul tells these Christians that they are 'in Christ' (1:2), and just as he is about to press home his argument in 2:8-15 he states even more forcibly that their existence is in him. In v.6 the verb περιπατέω would seem to need its Hebrew metaphorical sense of 'live', as it is generally given in modern translations

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this theme running through the whole letter, for he entitles his commentary: 'The All-Sufficient Christ'. W. Barclay, The All-Sufficient Christ (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964).

and paraphrases. ¹. Then in v.7 Paul says they have been rooted (*ῥιζώω*) in him, and built up (*ἐποικοδομέω*) in him. Phillips renders these verses: "Just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so go on living in him - in simple faith. Grow out of him as a plant grows out of the soil it is planted in, becoming more and more sure of the faith...", and seems to capture Paul's picture here of the Christian living, being nourished and growing 'in Christ'.

Significantly, all the references to this relationship with Christ come in the material leading up to 2:11-13. ². (Later parts of the letter could be said to be applying the consequences of the relationship) This 'union' with Christ relationship is, then, the general line that Paul is taking. If the Colossians are 'in Christ', and he is sufficient, then they can have no need of any of the alternatives mentioned in 2:8. It is in these verses around the reference to baptism that this argument comes to fullest flower:

- v.9 - in him is the fullness of the godhead
- v.10 - in him you have come to fullness of life
- v.11 - in him you were circumcised

1. e.g., Weymouth, Phillips, RSV, NEB, Living Bible, Good News Bible, New International Version.

2. The relationship is explicitly or implicitly stated at 1:2, 14, 18, 22, 24; 2:6, 7, 10, 11 (12). It might be argued that it is referred to also at 4:7 and 17 but these verses occur in the context of personal messages and not the main argument of the letter.

v.12 - with him you were buried in baptism

v.12 - with him you were raised ¹.

v.13 - with him you were quickened.

The pattern of the argument is only too clear.

And it becomes all the stronger if something of Lohse's opinion is allowed. He has made a study of the use of 'with Christ' in the Pauline letters, and finds the phrase repeatedly in Colossians. With only the exception of 3:4, the phrase occurs in contexts (which he calls baptismal) relating to death and resurrection with Christ: 2:12, 13, 20; 3:1, 3. He concludes:

"Since this letter's statements about union "with Christ" refer to such an extent to the present fellowship with Christ, the phrase "with Christ" takes on almost the same meaning as the formula "in Christ". For both expressions are used to describe the appropriation of the new life which the Christian received in baptism. Therefore, the train of thought begun by "in him" (2:9f) and "in whom" (2:11f) can be continued by "with him" (2:13) without any difference in meaning." ².

This equating of 'with Christ' to 'in Christ' is remarkably similar to Robinson's view we noted earlier in dealing with Rom.6 that for Paul 'with Christ' "...speaks of no external concomitance" but was the same in meaning as 'in Christ'. ³. Certainly in the verses immediately before us we have an abundance of references to 'with

1. For the moment we ignore the $\epsilon\nu$ $\tilde{\omega}$ which just precedes $\sigma\upsilon\nu\eta\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\rho\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$.

2. E. Lohse, Colossians and Philemon, trans., W.R. Poehlmann and R.J. Karris (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p.105.

3. See above, p.143.

Christ' - συνταφέντες αὐτῷ, συνηγέρθητε (v.12), and συνεζωοποίησεν σὺν αὐτῷ (v.13). What gives strength to Lohse's and Robinson's views for this context is that these references occur in a setting already declared to be one of 'in Christ'. Because of that the 'with Christ' references reinforce and apply for the believer the significance of being 'in Christ'. This then becomes, truly, language of co-operation. Thus it could be said that the references to 'in Christ' and 'with Christ', when taken together, combine to give a super-model of 'union with Christ'. 1.

Dunn writes: "We might say that vv.11f are an expansion of v.10's ἵστί ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι; vv.11-12a describes the negative side and v.12b the positive side of that coming to fullness of life in Christ. Each time he stresses that it was in him that these things took place." 2. Beasley-Murray comes to a similar conclusion: "The emphasis lies on Christ's act and the participation of the Christian in that event in Him...". 3.

1. The word 'union' is used because it covers the sense in a general way. Any one word has the danger of bringing in the wrong connotations as well as the right ones. Other words which we have used before, such as 'oneness' or 'solidarity', should also be borne in mind to give a general 'feel' to the sense rather than the particular denotations and implications of any one word.

2. Dunn, op. cit., p.155.

3. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.153.

Our appreciation of the presence, and the significance, of the super-model is reinforced if it is noticed that Paul did not need to speak in this way. He could have said: "You were buried in baptism, that is, your old life was laid to rest". But he said: *συνταφέντες αὐτῷ*... The whole point was that the burial was jointly with Christ. Paul could have said: "You were raised through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead", that is, because they knew God had been powerful enough to raise Jesus, they would have faith that he was able to raise them too. But he said: *συνηγέρθητε*... It is a co-resurrection which Paul has in mind, jointly with Christ, not two resurrections (Christ's and the believer's) of the same kind.¹ In v.13, containing as it does references to trespasses and uncircumcised flesh, we might especially have expected Paul not to have 'implicated' Christ but merely to have said: "You were dead in your trespasses and uncircumcised flesh but God quickened you, forgiving...". But he said: *συνεβωποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ*. Paul is prepared, even with these references, to put Christ and the believer together.

The passage, therefore, contains a super-model. The believers are said to be 'in Christ'; events taken to be true for Christ are also held to be true for the

1. As we shall investigate more fully shortly. See below, pp.218ff.

Christian. The believer, it would seem, is regarded as being united to Christ. He is at one with Christ. Exactly the degree to which each is 'identified' with the other, while possibly not a question completely foreign to the New Testament (for Paul often stresses the 'lordship' of Christ over the believer, thus to some extent making a point of setting Christ apart), is not an issue appropriate to this passage. No measure is intended, for Paul is not engaged in musing on that as a subject in itself, but as part of his argument is seeking to link the believer to Christ. He wants the Colossians to know that all things that are needful are in Christ (in contrast to the worthless, deceitful philosophies others are propagating), and they are in Christ, and therefore they have all that they need. Having shown the sufficiency of Christ, Paul relates it to the believers by speaking of a oneness with Christ. He is relevant to them because they share in what happened to him.

It is under the influence of this super-model that we must now look at the three principal metaphors before us, allowing what we have just seen to guide our interpretation as Paul allowed that super-model to affect his choosing of these metaphors in the first place.

As we examine these we must juggle with two principles of metaphorical interpretation. Firstly, as just stated, we must allow the super-model to colour, to influence, our interpretation. We said before that the backdrop to a stage can shape an audience's understanding

of what is being enacted on that stage.¹ It is only reasonable to presume that the producer of a play chooses his backdrop with some care, with a particular intention. He chooses it with a view to guiding the audience to the right understanding of the actual play. Similarly the super-model colours the interpretation of the specific word or phrase, swaying our appreciation of the sense to make it fit with the model. Secondly, the particular metaphor in use must also be allowed to evoke its own message. What a metaphor is matters. In expressive discourse, we said, unlike mathematical or other such terminology, the symbols are not arbitrary signs. While each metaphor is a 'window', each has a particular shape to it and therefore individually shapes our view through it.² Each metaphor must then, in general terms, be 'given its head'.

These two principles of interpretation could become contradictory in practice. At one moment we are trying to let the super-model influence our understanding of the particular metaphor. But, again, we are trying to allow that metaphor to convey fully its own meaning. That conflict, however, never really arises. For it must be recognised that the particular metaphor never exists as a metaphor on its own. It never has an existence outwith a particular context. The metaphor

1. See above, pp.99ff.

2. See above, pp.58ff.

is always seen in that context, and therefore is interpreted in the light of that context. (If somehow it were not, then that would simply amount to bad interpretation.) If a super-model controls that context, then the particular metaphor is interpreted with regard to the super-model. So the metaphor is given its full expression for that context.

That is how we must approach our metaphors here. Each must be allowed to stimulate thought appropriate to the metaphor it is, and each must simultaneously stimulate only thought appropriate to the super-model.

Because of this approach, on looking at περιετμήθητε ... ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, we immediately have some clues to point us in the right direction, and perhaps save us from some of the horrendous debates based on varying interpretations of this verse. For it would seem that some commentators fail almost at the start for they do not handle the material rightly. That περιετμήθητε is a metaphor is generally perceived, and frequent reference made to both Old and New Testament passages which speak of a 'spiritual' circumcision of some sort (e.g., Deut.10:16; 30:6; Jer.4:4; Rom.2:29; Phil.3:3). It is the treatment of ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ which leaves so much to be desired. What very frequently happens is that the genitive is taken as subjective and περιτομῇ handled, not so much as a metaphor (or part of the περιετμήθητε metaphor) but as a synonym for βαπτίσματα in v.12. Thus the meaning is

taken to be 'the circumcision which Christ gives', that is, baptism. This leads to the many statements that circumcision is now referred to as baptism, that baptism for Christians has taken over the significance of circumcision: Flemington: "St. Paul adds here the striking thought that baptism is the Christian counterpart of Jewish circumcision. What circumcision meant under the Old Dispensation, that, and no less, is the meaning of baptism for those living in the New Age."; ¹ Dibelius: "Die Taufe...ersetzt die Beschneidung; der neue Initiationsritus ist an die Stelle des alten getreten"; ² Schnackenburg sees here a comparison "between Jewish circumcision and Christian baptism, and the latter appears as the ideal fulfilment of the ancient rite"; ³ Caird speaks of "the Christian substitute for circumcision, which is baptism"; ⁴ Jeremias says: "Paul here names baptism 'the Christian circumcision' (ἡ περιτομή τοῦ Χριστοῦ) and describes it thereby as the Christian sacrament which corresponds to Jewish circumcision and replaces it"; ⁵ Cullmann says it is

1. Flemington, op. cit., p.62.

2. M. Dibelius, An die Kolosser Epheser an Philemon (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1927), p.22.

3. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.68.

4. G.B. Caird, Paul's Letters from Prison (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p.194.

5. J. Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, trans., D. Cairns (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960), pp.39-40.

explicit in this verse that baptism is "a fulfilment, and thus a repeal, of Jewish circumcision...".^{1.}

Now, many scholars engage in strong debate with those who hold such a line. Beasley-Murray even suggests that such treatment of the text "gives the impression of an undue desire to make hasty leaps to reach a desired ecclesiastical position".^{2.} Many arguments are ranged against this equation of circumcision and baptism, principally centering on evidence from Acts which suggests that both circumcision and baptism continued in the Christian Church for many years, and on the absence of an appeal to such a significance of baptism by Paul in his letter to the Galatians.^{3.} However, none of this is really necessary, for the equation of baptism and circumcision rests on taking *περιτομῇ* as a synonym for baptism, and reading the genitive as subjective. If the rules of metaphorical interpretation are used, this is seriously called into question.

We noted the existence of the super-model of union with Christ, showing itself in the linking of the Christian to Christ. That super-model must be allowed to guide the interpretation here, reinforced as it is

1. O. Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, trans., J.K.S. Reid (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1950), p.56.

2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.157.

3. An excellent brief summary of this 'side's' case may be found in White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, pp.210-11.

by the ἐν αὐτῷ at the beginning of v.11. The pattern is that something will be true of the Christian because it is first true of Christ. This is the way we perceived that Paul was making what Christ had done relevant to these Colossians. They are 'in him' and therefore what can be said of Christ now also applies to them. It is this pattern which we must look for here. When we do so we find a metaphor with a qualifying phrase:

true of the Christian - περιετμήθητε

first true of Christ - ἡ περιτομή τοῦ Χριστοῦ

We are guided to understand ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ as referring to an experience of Christ's. By allowing the super-model which lies behind this whole passage to guide our understanding here, then we take this to be a reference to the circumcision which Christ underwent. In this case, then, the genitive is objective. It is the knowledge that the super-model exists in the background; and must be heeded, which shapes the interpretation in this way. Had the super-model not been present at all, then we should have had no sure means from this context of knowing what type of genitive was intended. But given its presence, our understanding of the verse must follow a pattern compatible with the super-model. To do this requires reading the genitive as objective.

The fact that περιτομή is also a metaphor (i.e., it does not refer to the literal circumcision of the infant Jesus) is both a hindrance and a help in inter-

preting the verse. It is a hindrance inasmuch as a literal word at this point would have left no ambiguity of meaning and no question which way to read the genitive. But it is a help because in applying the same metaphor to Christ as to the believer the super-model of union is clearly perceived to be operating here, and that guides us to the right interpretation of these matters.

So we perceive that, because of the super-model, it was wrong to interpret *περιτομή* to mean baptism. Now we must become more constructive and see the inter-linking of meaning between these metaphors in vv.11-12, discovering especially, as we do so, the particular nature of the reference to baptism.

We must appreciate, first of all, the metaphorical structure of v.11. The main metaphor is *περιετμήθητε*, but it does not stand alone. By lifting it out of the text momentarily we may see more clearly the verse's structure:

<u>Metaphor</u>	<u>Qualifying phrases</u>
<i>περιετμήθητε</i>	1. <i>ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός</i> 2. <i>ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ</i>

This time we do not have a metaphor with a single word as qualifier but rather with two qualifying phrases. The qualifier of a metaphor, as we now know, serves both to stimulate the metaphor into life (thus revealing it to be a metaphor) and to guide the understanding of that metaphor. To some extent the first of these functions

is done by the phrase περιτομή ἀχειροποιήτω because it explicitly denies that περιετμήθητε is to be taken literally.¹ But the qualifying phrases also do this, one by specifying that it is the body of the flesh (not a portion of the flesh) that is put off, the other by saying they were circumcised in or by Christ's circumcision - these statements revealing that this is no ordinary circumcision which is being spoken of.

The other function of a qualifier is that of guiding and controlling the meaning of the metaphor. Therefore the qualifying phrases explain something of the meaning of their metaphor. The word περιτέμνω has a very basic meaning of cutting round or cutting off. Here, because the word is not being used literally, it does not refer to the cutting off of the foreskin. Something else - not physical - is being cut away but the metaphor itself cannot tell us what that is. The explanation comes principally from the first of the two qualifying phrases: ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός. It is immediately apparent that ἀπέκδυσαι has a fundamentally similar meaning, of putting or stripping off, to that of περιτέμνω. This metaphor of ἀπέκδυσαι is, as we have noted, part of the qualifier. Thus it guides us

1. In fact Caird lists precisely this phrase as an example of how a metaphor is marked by a "qualifying adjective". Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.188. Certainly it does fulfil this function, but in order to avoid confusion with the other qualifying phrases, to which we shall be giving further attention, we shall reserve that name for them.

into the meaning of the metaphor. It does this here in two ways. Firstly, by altering the meaning slightly from that of περιτέμνω it gives the impression of something fairly radical taking place - something is stripped off, really laid aside. The verb ἀπεκδύομαι is used elsewhere in this letter in two senses, both of a fairly radical nature. In 3:9 it refers to the putting off of the old nature, and the sense is 'complete separation from'. Grimm gives, as the basic meaning of the verb, "wholly to put off from one's self".¹ In 2:15 the context is one of victory for Christ over the 'principalities and powers', coinciding with the other sense given for the verb as "despoil, disarm".² The first of these senses is more appropriate in 2:11, but the point is that the word carries a sense of complete removal, while περιτέμνω has more the meaning of careful cutting. Paul is probably happy to mix the two ideas together for cumulative effect - another example of the jostling of metaphors, functioning in a manner similar to that in Gal. 3:27. The second way in which this qualifier guides us into the meaning of the metaphor περιτέμνω is that it gives us an answer to the question: 'What was put off?'. The qualifier tells us: τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκὸς. That was 'circumcised' away.

1. Grimm, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.56.

2. Ibid.

Previously they existed τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς (v.13). Therefore only a 'circumcision' would do to put away that body of the flesh. The metaphor περιετμήθητε (backed up by ἀπεκδύσει) evokes an understanding of a cutting away, this being of the body of flesh.

But how did such a 'circumcision' happen for the Christian? The other qualifying phrase answers that question. It happened ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ. In him (ἐν ᾧ) lies whatever is true for the Christian (as the super-model operative here tells us), and it says of Christ that he has been 'circumcised'. From what has he been 'circumcised'? Because we know that what becomes true for the Christian is firstly true of Christ, the answer is: τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός. Christ has laid aside the 'body of flesh'. It has been cut from him. This is the metaphorical circumcision firstly of Christ and secondly of the believer, the latter happening because of the oneness that believer comes to have with Christ.

That Christ carried the body of sinful flesh to the grave is a Pauline thought. In Rom.8:3 it is said that God sent his Son ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. In 2 Cor.5:21 Paul says boldly of Christ that God made him sin (ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν). One of the passages where this line of thought is most developed is, interestingly, in the area we previously studied, the

baptismal passage in Rom.6. There in v.6 Paul says: *ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας ...* The σύν-compound verb associates this crucifixion with Christ. And in v.10 he says: *ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐφ' ἧς*. The general idea in these verses is that Christ carried man's sin in himself and died with it, which is a parallel thought to that which we have here in Col.2:11: Christ carried the body of flesh¹. but has now been divested of it. In fact, Rom.6:6 and Col. 2:11 have parallel ideas but employ different metaphors. In the former the sinful body carried to the cross is destroyed (metaphor of destruction) and has no more power therefore (metaphor of enslavement used in comparison to man's new freedom, v.7). In the latter the body of flesh is cut away (metaphor of cutting) or put off (metaphor of undressing), and in other ways and words Paul goes on to show that it has no more effect on the believer (see especially vv.14f., 20f., and 3:3-11). The general idea which comes over from both these passages is that Christ has put off what is called the 'sinful body' or the 'body of flesh' and, because he has put it off, the Christian is considered also to be devoid of it.

1. To determine more precisely what is meant by 'body of flesh' is the work of others. The pejorative sense in which the phrase is used here is clear enough from the context and from the association in v.13 of 'uncircumcision of the flesh' with being 'dead in trespasses'.

One or two writers pick up something here of this sense of what Christ has done. Neill, paraphrasing v.11, says:

"He had lived, as we do, in a body of flesh; He was aware of all the weakness of the flesh, of its exposure to temptation, of the demands that it makes upon us, of the way in which it can constitute itself a hindrance to the fulfilment of the will of God. Now once and for all He has put all that away. He has stripped off, through death, that body of the flesh, and it can never again assert its claim on Him." 1.

And Beasley-Murray writes:

"Here is a circumcision which entailed the stripping off not of a small portion of flesh but the whole body - a gruesome figure for death. It would accord best with the language used if the two phrases 'in the stripping away of the body of death' and 'in the circumcision of Christ' were construed alike, i.e. by regarding the genitive as objective: the body of flesh was stripped off when Christ was circumcised." 2.

Bieder says: "Er ist ja gekreuzigt für uns, das heisst: er hat sich töten lassen und damit den Fleischesleib, unsern Fleischesleib, abtöten lassen." 3.

Christ endured the stripping off of the body of flesh in a 'circumcision' and the Christian is 'in him'. Therefore 'you were circumcised', says Paul, 'and your body of flesh was also stripped off'.

Yet the question still remains, 'But when does this become true for any particular believer?'. Now we may

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1. S. Neill, Paul to the Colossians (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), p.43.
 2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.152.
 3. W. Bieder, Der Kolosserbrief (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1943), p.141.

come to v.12, and to our second main metaphor, *συνταφέντες*. Christ died, and was laid in the tomb, the body of flesh dead. The body of flesh went to the tomb. It was buried, never to stir again, never to be associated with Christ again. When God raised Jesus from the dead the power of the flesh had gone - it had been buried, destroyed by the crucifixion (Rom.6:6-7). So how is anyone else released from their body of flesh? Paul's answer is to speak of the believer sharing Christ's burial. There he too is divested of the body of flesh.

Caird points to the participial nature of *συνταφέντες*, and thus its dependence on *περιετμήθητε*.¹ That is correct and serves to help to locate the place of the believer's 'circumcision'. The believer is circumcised in Christ by being buried with Christ. (Of course, *συνταφέντες* here reveals that multivalence of character we have seen before in metaphorical contexts - it is both metaphorical and non-metaphorical at the same time. Christ really was buried, and therefore it has a literal application to him. The believer is not, however, but, since it is said that he is, a metaphor is obviously being employed with respect to him.) It is in the sharing, in Christ, of his burial that the believer is, like Christ, divested of the body of flesh.

The metaphor of burial conveys the idea of the body of flesh being laid to rest for ever. It is gone,

1. Caird, Paul's Letters from Prison, p.193.

dead, and so without its power and effect on the individual concerned. Commonplaces such as these, associated with a burial, are the ones being evoked by this metaphor. This is a blunt metaphor, all the stronger for its starkness of meaning. 'You have been buried, circumsised of, stripped of the body of flesh.'

It does have a qualifier of sorts in the σὺν... αὐτῷ formula which surrounds the verb. This qualifies the application of the metaphor, first of all to make us think away any inappropriate connections. For example, the emphasis is not to fall on a burial effected by Christ. If that had been the meaning Paul would simply have written 'You have been buried...'. Instead, secondly, the qualifier guides our thoughts to the appropriate connection, in this case that it is a burial effected with Christ. The metaphor is not solely of burial but of joint-burial. If all Paul had wanted to say was that in baptism we laid down our sins (as some commentators seem to think), then a simple statement of 'buried in baptism' would have sufficed (accompanied by other changes in the text of the surrounding verses). However, Paul never intended that meaning. The emphasis does not fall most heavily on the idea of burial. It falls on the idea of being buried σὺν... αὐτῷ. Strictly speaking, Paul is not saying that baptism is the Christian's burial. The only burial was Christ's. What the metaphor συνταφέντες does is to unite the Christian in his baptism to Christ in his grave. It is

Christ who has been buried - the Christian in baptism is joined to him, and is therefore (by metaphor) considered buried as well. Baptism is then a burial because it unites the Christian to a buried Christ. The metaphor plus qualifier (and the two must be taken together) tells of a co-burial.

Burial is chosen as the moment in which to speak of this union coming about because it is the particularly relevant point for the Christian to be joined to Christ. It was in the grave that Christ laid down the body of flesh. Therefore the believer who needs to lay down personally the body of flesh is spoken of as united to Christ at that moment of burial. So Paul unites the Christian to Christ at that point, and does so by speaking of the Christian's baptism. The phrase ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι is thus being used in one of two possible senses. Either the dative is being employed as a locative, in which case the baptismal bath is here being thought of as a grave - the place of the co-burial. Or the dative carries an instrumental sense (as possibly in v.11), in which case baptism could be being thought of as an undertaker - the one carrying out the co-burial.

The first of these options would better please the 'anti-sacramentalists', those who feel nervous at the idea of baptism effecting any change in the believer. (Yet, if that use of ἐν is pressed here, then an equal force to the instrumental διὰ in the similar Rom.6:4 would have to be allowed.) But such issues are totally

foreign to our passage. Paul would seem baffled at our concern over a matter like that.¹ The point is that the one who is baptized thereby comes into this experience of co-burial with Christ. This co-burial occurs at baptism.

Up to this moment we have seen a very close link between the first two of our three main metaphors. We found that *περιετμήθητε* spoke of the Christian's laying down of the body of flesh when Christ laid his down. The participial nature of *συνταφέντες* linked the burial of which it spoke to the preceding verse. The body of flesh was laid aside when Christ's body was laid to rest in the grave. In baptism the Christian came to share in that burial, and so also lost his body of flesh. Thus far, then, we have:

a) a metaphor of circumcision to describe the shedding of the body of flesh for both Christ and believer;

b) a metaphor of co-burial, jointly emphasizing the laying to rest of the flesh life, and the believer's sharing in that;

1. Nock says: "It is now felt by many that to suppose that physical acts have direct consequences in the spiritual world savours of magic and is rather disreputable. ...(This attitude) does not, however, appear in early Christianity; and it was rare in the world around. Cultus was central in both; in nothing is Christianity more like its background." A.D. Nock, Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp.57-8.

c) a description of baptism as the point of entry into that shared experience.

One main metaphor is left: *συνηγέρθητε*. Several things may be said about its use here. Firstly, it fits the line of reasoning very well at this point. Paul has just spoken of a burial - now he speaks of a resurrection. The old flesh life has just been buried - a new life with new motives is now to come (see 3:1ff.).

Lightfoot says, with turn of the century phraseology: "Baptism is the grave of the old man, and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges thence, he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life." ¹.

Secondly, this metaphor also has a *σύν* qualifier. Resurrection happened to Christ and therefore happens also to the believer. It was true of Christ and therefore is true also of the one united to Christ. As we noted earlier, it is a co-resurrection, not two separate resurrections, that Paul speaks of. Again, what we have here is a metaphor conforming to the control of the super-model whose theme runs through the passage.

1. J.B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1900), p.182. We would resist the idea of baptism as a symbolic re-enactment of Christ's death and resurrection, which Lightfoot implies, on the grounds that (just as in Rom.6) there simply is no hint of such a thing in the text. However, the general 'end of the old, beginning of the new' tenor of Lightfoot's remarks is correct.

There could be considered to be a contradiction between what is being said here in Col.2:12 of an accomplished resurrection for the believer and the future resurrection spoken of in Rom.6:5. The latter, also, would seem more in accord with the concept of Christ as ἀπαρχή, used in relation to resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:20. There are two ways of dealing with this problem. One is to take due account of the purpose lying behind each passage. In Col.2, as we know, the writer is seeking to show Christ's importance, to demonstrate his sufficiency for all things, and to relate the believer to all that has been done by Christ. In that process the resurrection is included and the believer associated with it, thereby heightening the idea that Christ is all-sufficient, and that there is nothing lacking for which they could need to turn elsewhere. In Rom.6 the purpose is quite different. There Paul wants to demonstrate the folly of continuing to live a sinful life, because they are 'dead to sin' through their association with Christ's death. He wants to urge moral effort as a response to their dead relationship to sin. The suggestion that the resurrection had already occurred might tempt the Romans to complacency. Paul avoids that by referring to the resurrection of believers in eschatological terms. In 1 Cor.15 the context is different again. Paul is arguing about resurrection, and v.20 marks a turning point. In the previous few verses Paul has spelled out the consequences of there being no

resurrection, and from this point attempts to state positively what has happened and will happen. To that end he uses ἀπαρχή to convey something of the sense of sequence - Christ first, believers later. (Again resurrection for believers is being viewed eschatologically.) The difference between Colossians and these other passages is because of Paul's different purpose. Had Col.2 been a passage concerned with the sequence of resurrection then it would have been fair to compare it with the other passages, especially with 1 Cor.15. But it is not, and in Colossians questions of time-scale are inappropriate.

The other answer is to ask whether, in terms of the type of language, like is being compared with like. If, for Paul, the 'eschatological' resurrection was in some sense an 'event' which would involve people in rising - as 1 Thess.4:16f. appears to portray it - then we could accord a literal status to the resurrection language in Rom.6:5 and 1 Cor.15:20ff. However, no such literal resurrection was considered by the writer of Colossians to have happened already for believers. The resurrection of Col.2 is metaphorical, intended to express or urge the change which has occurred in the believer's life. Such a change must be one appropriate to a 'resurrected' life. In 3:1 Paul speaks again of resurrection with Christ and, indeed, goes on to draw ethical consequences from it. In the light of this difference between the senses in which resurrection is being spoken of, it is

clear for this reason also that comparisons are inappropriate.

Thirdly, the use of *συνεγείρω* means all the associations appropriate to being raised up are to be thought of - new beginning, new life, freedom from the old, etc. The only restrictions imposed on this train of thought come from the *σύν* qualifier. It is a new beginning, a new life, a new freedom with Christ. Paul specifically makes that point as he begins to urge ethical consequences in ch.3.

Fourthly, this metaphor is closely associated with faith. Again this stirs some to press home their argument against any efficacy of baptism itself. For example, Martin urges that faith is indispensable "directed not to the rite itself but to the God who works in the 'sacrament'...".¹ However, some caution is appropriate here. If it is argued that faith is expressly mentioned to show its indispensability for this resurrection with Christ to take place, then someone else could argue that its omission in the reference to burial with Christ equally shows faith's dispensability for that occurrence. If Paul were in prison (as some suppose) when writing this letter, then it would seem right to allow a prisoner's imprecision to him regarding the use of the word 'faith'. Taking Paul's writings generally, faith is a presupposition

1. R.P. Martin, Colossians, p.87.

underlying all he says, and if in one context he does not actually use that word, are we to presume he did not consider faith necessary on that occasion? Surely we are not. Conversely, we must not necessarily take him to be making some particularly vital point about faith on occasions when he does mention it.

Fifthly, there is the difficult question regarding the ἐν ᾧ which is related to *συνηγέρθητε*. To what does the ἐν ᾧ refer? Is it to Christ, as at the beginning of v.11? Or is it to baptism, the immediately preceding word? Therefore, does it mean 'in whom' or 'in which'? Commentators are fairly equally divided on the issue.¹ If the ἐν ᾧ were not to refer to baptism, then v.12a and v.12b would not run closely together, and some find that unlikely. And they see an awkwardness in the language if the believer is said to be 'raised with Christ in Christ'. The conclusion, then, according to Beasley-Murray, is that "it seems to be the simplest and most natural interpretation of v.12 to refer the relative pronoun to its immediate antecedent, namely 'in baptism'".² However, probably we

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1. Dunn comments that Continental expositors normally take the reference to be to Christ, while English speaking exegetes usually make the connection with baptism. See Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, fn., p.154.
 2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.154. He adds that this interpretation brings the saying into line with the antithetic clauses of Rom.6:3-4, 5, 8, and 11 in their relating of baptism to participation in both the dying and the rising with Christ.

are wiser to heed Dunn who takes the reference to be to Christ. He says, first of all: "Paul is not still thinking in terms of baptism; nor is he thinking of emergence from the baptismal waters as a resurrection or as symbolical of resurrection".¹ Paul never was thinking of baptism, at least not as the dominant thought of the context. As we said at the outset, his thought is of the sufficiency of Christ and the believer's participation in him. Baptism only appeared along the way in association with the metaphor of being buried with Christ. In v.12b Paul is continuing to give the practical outworking, not of baptism, but of the super-model of union with Christ. Dunn goes on:

"...vv.9-12 is a single unit in the long sentence vv.8-15. Christ is the principal theme of this unit. Paul is meeting head on any attempt to disparage Christ or to diminish his role in redemption. The whole emphasis is therefore on Christ, and on the fact that redemption and fulfilment is accomplished in Christ." ².

Dunn is conscious of the problem of awkwardness of language and accepts that it exists, but points out that this is no more awkward than the precisely parallel Eph.2:4-6: καὶ συνέγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς ἑκουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. In fact, he feels the closeness of the parallel tells in favour of referring ἐν Χ to Christ. "Nor can we say that this awkwardness of thought is one Paul would avoid - rather it is thrust

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.154.

2. Ibid., p.155.

upon him by his liking for the twin ideas of being ἐν Χριστῷ and of experiencing the saving events σὺν Χριστῷ." ¹. He concludes: "Both structure, theme and emphasis therefore demand that ἐν ᾧ be referred to Christ." ².

At the end of all such argument over the reference, the difference of meaning involved is surprisingly marginal. Were we to take the ἐν ᾧ as a reference back to baptism, then what is Paul saying? His meaning would be that baptism, as well as being the place of burial with Christ, is also the place of resurrection with Christ. (There can be no question of instrumentality in baptism this time because of the διὰ τῆς κλυσέως reference.) If the participial nature of συνταφέντες links it in meaning to the metaphorical circumcision and places that experience in baptism, then Paul is saying the next thing to happen is a consequent resurrection, a resurrection identified as being with Christ. Now, what does Paul mean if ἐν ᾧ actually refers to Christ? Again we have the same idea of the believer laying down the body of flesh in baptism, laying it down by a burial with Christ. Subsequent to that death associated with baptism, there comes a

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.155. And if συνταφέντες, being a participle, belongs with v.11 it therefore is linked with the ἐν ᾧ at the beginning of that verse, giving also an 'in...with' reading.

2. Ibid.

resurrection. The believer is not left buried, but, as Christ was raised, the believer 'in him' is raised with him. In both cases, following a co-burial there comes a co-resurrection. The difference is one of emphasis. To take ἐν ᾧ to refer to baptism emphasises that as the location of these experiences. That this is the case is not denied by the other view. To take ἐν ᾧ as a reference to Christ emphasises the union with Christ essential for this resurrection (as previously affirmed in vv.10-11 for burial) to take place. Again this is not denied by the alternative. Given the existence of the super-model of union with Christ, to take the reference to be to Christ seems more likely.

Let us now state briefly our conclusions from our study of this passage:

a) The reference to baptism occurred, and therefore must be interpreted, within a framework of a super-model of union with Christ. The super-model was perceived, partly from some key phrases (like ἐν αὐτῷ and ἐν ᾧ, vv.10-11), and partly from the flow of the argument, employing 'with Christ' terminology. This umbrella model controlled the passage.

b) The reference to baptism was surrounded by metaphors, but three (περιετμήθητε, συνταφέντες and συνηγέρθητε) were particularly influential and important in our understanding of that reference, the last having more or less relevance depending on whether or not it was taken to refer directly to baptism.

c) The metaphor *περιετμήθητε* referred to the act of 'stripping off' which had happened to the believer. Its qualifying phrases told us that that was something which had happened to Christ, and involved his laying aside of the body of flesh.

d) The participial nature of the metaphor *συνταφέντες* identified the occasion of the believer's share in Christ's 'circumcision' as the moment in which he shared Christ's burial. That metaphorical burial occurred for the believer in his baptism. But the emphasis of the burial was on its shared nature - the verb used the *σύν* formula - and therefore baptism was spoken of, not only as an experience of 'death', but as uniting the baptisand to Christ.

e) Subsequent to that joining to Jesus in his grave in baptism, united with him the believer (in the metaphor *συνηγέρθητε*) shared his resurrection.

Two thoughts ought to remain with us from this section. One is to notice just how important was the super-model. It controlled the line of thought at all points, and therefore our conclusions had to 'exist happily' with that super-model. The other point is to notice just how highly charged with metaphor this passage was. In places almost every word was a metaphor, and certainly the meaning hinged on a right understanding of the main metaphors. Without some knowledge of the functions of metaphorical language, and without therefore

tackling it on those terms, no correct understanding of these verses, of this reference to baptism, could be reached.

CHAPTER VII

I CORINTHIANS 1:13

In this passage, as in some of his other baptismal references, Paul is being metaphorical without using a metaphor. That apparently self-contradictory statement is shown to be true by a recognition of two facts. Firstly, Paul does not employ a metaphor in the strict grammatical substitutionary sense ('That man is a lion' = 'That man is brave', 'lion' being a metaphorical substitution for 'brave'). Nevertheless, secondly, whether it is recognised or not, the meaning taken from especially *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε* is far more than literal. Once more, people are not normally baptized into a name, nor a person, but water. Therefore a non-literal, metaphorical sense is intended. What exactly that is will be the subject of our exploration in this chapter.

We must begin by establishing this verse in its context, and regarding the latter we find general harmony among commentators. Goudge heads his section on vv.10-17, "Exhortation to Unity", ¹ and no-one would seriously argue with that, since these are almost Paul's precise words in v.10: *Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς... ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ᾧ ἐν ὑμῖν*

1. H.L. Goudge, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), p.6.

σχίσματα... κτλ. Quarrelling (v.11) had been reported to Paul, and he goes on to define this as having its basis in some form of partisanship (v.12); v.13 is the beginning of Paul's reasoned condemnation of this state of affairs. 1.

From this it is reasonable for us to presume two things: that Paul is going to show why such allegiance to party heads is wrong, and that he will point the Corinthians in the direction of their proper allegiance. To do both these things requires that he speak of one subject, Christ. Putting him to the fore, and asking penetrating questions, is Paul's mode of attack. Moffatt says:

"Instead of discussing the respective claims of the cliques, he penetrates to their common error. Such differences of opinion and taste, treating apostles and teachers as though they were rival lecturers on moral philosophy or even popular actors on the stage, took men's attention off the common Lord, roused undue pride in human leaders and preachers, set Christians at loggerheads, and ignored the fact that all the different capacities of prominent men were so many varieties and organs of the one life which God himself provided for his Church in Jesus Christ." 2.

Paul believes that by putting the Corinthians' attention back on the common Lord, the balance will be redressed

1. It hardly needs saying that vv.13-17 constitute but the first thrust of Paul against this party-spirit in Corinth, for he will continue to return to this theme throughout the letter. Of course, that he should choose to speak of baptism in that first attack is undoubtedly significant.

2. J. Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p.8.

and the folly of their partisanship revealed.¹ The focus is v.13 with its three questions.

He begins by asking: *μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός*;² The verb *μερίσσω* has a fundamental meaning of 'divide' or 'distribute', and commonly also 'assign a part' or 'allot'.³ Orr and Walther give the paraphrase: "to split up into constituent parts, to divide into portions".⁴ Here, therefore, we are faced with a strange question! Or, more precisely, surely we are faced with the wrong question? Up until v.12 Paul has been speaking of the church in Corinth, with that last verse spelling out the names under which the church members have grouped themselves. The most expected question (or comment) with which to continue would be: 'Is the church divided?', 'Is the church split into constituent parts?' Instead Paul inserts *Χριστός*. Why should this be? Conzelmann connects the question with the immediately prior *ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ* and says:

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1. In two of the three questions Paul uses his own name, yet his obvious purpose is to throw attention away from the party heads and on to Christ - thus the statement that he is directing their attention to the common Lord remains valid.
 2. Numerous commentators point out that these words are not necessarily a question. It could be an indignant or exasperated exclamation 'Christ is divided'. Whichever is the case, however, does not greatly alter the significance.
 3. Liddell and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, II, p.1103.
 4. W.F. Orr and J.A. Walther, 1 Corinthians (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1976), p.150.

"The simplest way of understanding the expression and the argument is to presuppose the view of the church as the body of Christ".¹ And Meyer comments on this phrase: "Der Leib Christi, die Kirche, könnte tatsächlich durch eine sündhafte Katastrophe innerhalb der Kirche selbst zerrissen werden!"² Schnackenburg pursues a similar line: "The first sentence (v.13a) proceeds from the idea that the community as a whole represents 'the Christ' and therefore must not be divided. ...By 'Christ' is meant the Body of Christ, since the community as a whole is in view here (cf. the same expression in 1 Corinthians xii 12)." ³ Now, the danger in these deductions arises precisely from the words Schnackenburg puts into parenthesis - that an interpretation of this passage is being made from chapter 12.⁴ Is this the only possible interpretation?

It would perhaps be better not to make any assumptions from a later chapter, nor to presume a metaphorical substitution of 'Christ' for some other word, unless no sense can be made of the words as they stand.

1. H. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, trans., J.W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p.35.

2. W. Meyer, Der erste Brief an die Korinther, I (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947), p.33.

3. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, pp.18-19.

4. Is it naive to think that if Paul feels the need to explain at considerable length in ch.12 what he means by 'body of Christ', then he would not assume a full-blown prior understanding of the concept here at ch.1?

(We may recall that metaphors are commonly revealed by the presence of qualifiers which show that something beyond the normal literal meaning is intended. Qualifiers put a word into a context where a literal meaning is shown to be inappropriate. Here there is no qualifier.) Let us assume for a moment that when Paul says 'Christ' he means it. He refers to the same Christ as in the rest of the chapter. That Christ is both the earthly and heavenly Christ, the Christ who was crucified (implied in v.13b, and stated in vv.17 and 23), and the Christ who is active now (v.8) and will one day be revealed (v.7). That Christ is one with whom the Corinthians have a present relationship - that of being *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* (vv.2, 4, 30).¹ Their current existence as Christians is lived 'in Christ'. This relationship we have come across before. In other contexts we found Paul arguing that, because of this, what is true of Christ is true of the Christian.² Here, in v.13a, his argument is the corollary of that. Because (in answer to his own question) Christ is not divided, then those in him ought not to be divided either,

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1. Naturally there are other ways in which the Corinthians also relate to Christ, e.g., to him as Lord (v.2), and as one with whom they have fellowship (v.9). However, as we shall see, it is the relationship contained in the expression *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* which makes best sense in v.13a.
 2. Although we did note his hesitancy regarding the 'resurrection' of Christians in Rom.6. See above, p.146.

or, even, are not divided either (though the moral imperative arising from the fact of being 'in Christ' would be parallel, for example, to his argument in Rom.6, that because Christ has been raised the Christian ought to walk in newness of life). Christ is one, and therefore those in Christ should be one also. That they are not is an absurdity, a contradiction of the 'fact' that they are all in the one Christ. Thus Paul really is speaking of Christ, and we do not need to substitute the 'church' as the 'body of Christ'. In so speaking of Christ he challenges the factions of those whose status is 'in Christ'. Paul's first line of argument in v.13, then, is one based on an underlying metaphor of union of the Corinthian Christians with Christ. Goudge writes:

"So entirely is the Church one with her Lord that to divide the one is to divide the other. Since there cannot be a divided Christ, there is no place for a divided Church. ...To S. Paul that union was far more than a beautiful idea; it was a great fact, upon which arguments could be built and appeals based." 1.

Thus, on a metaphor, Paul begins his attack: μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός;

In the second question, μὴ Παῦλος ἑσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν...; Paul (by implication) speaks of Christ's crucifixion, a repeated theme in the opening of this letter (1:17, 18, 23; 2:2, 8). Paul tells the Corinthians that it is Christ crucified that he preached to them (1:23; 2:2), and not some wisdom of his own (1:17;

1. Goudge, op. cit., pp.6-7.

2:1,4). He did not come ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου (v.17) but with ὁ λόγος... ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ (v.18). The emphasis in these later references seems to fall on the fact that Christ was crucified, but here in v.13 it is on who was crucified. 'Paul was not crucified', he says, 'but Christ who was crucified for you'. In other words, Christ is the one who has actually died for them - Paul (or Apollos, or Cephas) as only the preacher of that fact is of small importance by comparison. Because his message is one of crucifixion, all attention should be on the one who suffered that. It was of Christ and his death that Paul spoke to the Corinthians. That is what the question in v.13b is designed to highlight. How absurd, then, that they should give any great leadership to Paul (or the others). Did he die for them? Was he crucified for them? Only Christ, as he preached, had done these things and therefore it is nonsense that anyone other than Christ be treated as leader.

It could be argued that here Paul is working with the model of saviour, or redeemer. The word σωτήρ never, of course, occurs in the 'pillar epistles' of Paul, but that is not to say that the concept is not operative even without the specific word.¹ We only

1. Wilson finds σωτήρ in frequent use in paganism prior to the time of Christ. But, he says: "...we can claim for St. Paul that his conception of the Saviour was more comprehensive than any that had been before him, that it was more spiritual than the pagan idea, and that it was definitely bound up with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Risen Lord, and

need to refer to Rom.5:10 to find the verb σώζω used of Christ, and Gal.1:4 to find the explanation for Christ's giving himself for our sins as being ὅπως ἐξέλῃται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ. Jesus is the agent of deliverance and salvation, and it is that model which Paul has in mind here in v.13b.

Thus in v.13 so far, we find two metaphors implied - the first of union with Christ, and the second of rescue. That brings us to the third question: εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;

Before saying anything else about this it is perhaps worth making clear that Paul's purpose in all his questions here is to be deliberately absurd. Of course Christ is not divided. Of course Paul was not crucified for them. And of course they were not baptized into his name. Yet Edwards thinks that some in Corinth actually boasted that such a baptism had occurred, and he raises the problem: "The difficulty is to understand how any member of the Church could have supposed that he had been baptized into the name of Paul".¹ There is no

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particularly with His atoning death." T. Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), p.70. In the light of common pagan usage it is interesting to note Paul's general avoidance of the word σωτήρ.

1. T.C. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), p.22. He writes at some length to explain how such claims must be false because Paul would have had personally to instigate an initiation rite such as baptism to establish himself as head over

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difficulty at all, of course, for Paul is no more describing an actual claim here than he was, for example, with the second question. Obviously no-one imagined Paul had been crucified for them, and similarly no-one imagined they had been baptized in Paul's name. He is employing the rhetoric of exasperation to bring the Corinthians up sharply.

Given that that is the case, it is only reasonable to presume a meaning in his words here which would have an appropriate shock effect on the Corinthians. Paul must have thought that the implications of a baptism into his name would jolt them out of their party attachment to him (and correspondingly out of attachment to the others). It must have been unthinkable that the relationship spoken of in these words about baptism should exist between the Corinthians and Paul.

Many commentators, in explaining this reference to baptism, use the word 'allegiance' to describe that relationship.¹ Others use terms of similar force,

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them, but his failure to baptize many himself is his protection against such interpretations.

1. For example, L. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), p.41; A. Robertson and A. Plummer, First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), p.13; C. Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1857), p.11; Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.117. To be fair to these writers, most use many other words as well as 'allegiance' and therefore to some extent qualify their meaning.

including Beasley-Murray who speaks of 'discipleship'.¹ The reasoning given by Beasley-Murray for this term partly arises from v.12. He notes Heitmüller's interpretation of 'in the name' as signifying the making over of someone so as to belong to another. But he points out that the series 'I am of Paul...of Apollos...of Cephas...of Christ' does not really mean 'I belong to Paul as his property, as his slave; and I to Apollos, and I to Cephas', for none of the Corinthians would have made themselves over to their Christian leaders in so complete a sense. He goes on:

"In these cases the language indicates a belonging in the sense of discipleship: 'I follow Paul; I Apollos; I Cephas'. One could reproduce the sense by 'I am Paul's man, I Apollos' etc.', so long as it was realized that this was intended in a reduced sense. A baptism in the name of Paul accordingly is baptism with the purpose of becoming Paul's disciple." 2.

Dunn's line of argument is similar:

"βαπτίζειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα clearly means 'to baptize into allegiance to the person named' and indicates that baptism in the name of Christ is the formal act wherein and whereby the baptisand gives himself to Christ. For one thing, ἐγὼ δὲ Παύλου (v.12) obviously means the same as ἐγὼ ἐβαπτίσθην εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου (v.13). Since the former describes the attitude of disciple to leader, the latter, to be a rebuke, must describe the action by which allegiance is given." 3.

Both these writers make an assumption, and one which is almost certainly wrong. It simply is not as obvious as

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1. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.178.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Dunn, op. cit., p.117.

Dunn or Beasley-Murray make out that v.13c means the same as the allegiance statements of v.12. There is no reason why it must, and a very good reason why it does not.

Paul's words throughout v.13, as we noted before, are intended to shock. The suggestion that Christ is divided is absurdly shocking. The suggestion that Paul was crucified for them is absurdly shocking. And the suggestion that they were baptized into the name of Paul must be absurdly shocking. If, however, all that is being said in v.13c is that a relationship of allegiance was established to Paul, then that is not very shocking. There are instances in Paul's letters where he approves of the allegiance churches give to him, for example, Phil.4:10ff; Gal.4:14-15. Even discipleship to such a leader as Paul is not unthinkable. In chapter 4 he calls the Corinthians τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ (v.14) and thinks of himself as their father through the gospel (v.15). Then he says (v.16): παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, and continues to explain (v.17) they should remember τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ. The precise sense in which Paul means these statements could be debated. The word μιμητής means an 'imitator',¹ but this can be interpreted with different emphases. Other uses in Pauline material suggest that Paul considered his life to be patterned

1. Grimm, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p.415.

on Christ, and, in turn, his converts should pattern their lives on him (1 Cor.11:1; 1 Thess.1:6). His role was therefore that of an intermediary, in no way usurping Christ's position.¹ Nevertheless, in setting an example (Paul uses μιμητής and τύπος together in Phil.3:17) which he urges converts to follow, there are general discipleship-type characteristics in mind. Phillips' paraphrase of 4:16 says: "...I implore you to follow the footsteps of me your father". He had no qualms about urging his converts to do that, and so it would appear that a relationship of allegiance, or even discipleship, to Paul is simply not so shocking in his letters. What he is saying in 1:13c must be a relationship of such a nature that it would be quite shocking were it to be thought to exist between the Corinthians and Paul.

When compared with the rest of Paul's baptismal references these words contain one unique feature. Only here (and in the parallel v.15) is there a Pauline use of 'the name formula' (as it is commonly known) in connection with baptism. In Rom.6 and Gal.3 Paul used the phrase βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν, but here (with his

1. Obviously Paul would have been horrified were any discipleship to him to be a substitute for their relationship to Christ. (In 1 Cor.4:17 the words ἐν Χριστῷ are noteworthy.) But that is because of the particular relationship established with Christ - more than a general 'allegiance' or 'discipleship' - and what that is we have yet to uncover from 1:13c.

own name) the phrase is: *βαπτίζω εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου*. While such an expression, sometimes with variations of preposition, is common in Acts,¹ this is the only occurrence in Paul. We may recall that when examining Rom.6:3 we found the view expressed that *βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν* was simply a shorthand expression of this longer phrase. At that time we found that view to be at best unproven.² But now, of course, it falls to us to put some positive content into this expression.

One of the first things to strike someone intent upon understanding the meaning of this phrase is the positive babel of voices from commentators. Barrett says: "The phrase indicates that it is under the authority of Christ that the baptism takes place, and also that the person baptized becomes the property of Christ, is entered, as it were, to his account";³ Goudge: "...the 'name of our Lord Jesus Christ' stands for the Lord in His revealed character and dignity...";⁴ Conzelmann: "The name represents the person";⁵ Grosheide: "To be baptized into the name of someone

1. Cf., Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5.

2. See above, pp.159-60.

3. C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971), p.47.

4. Goudge, op. cit., p.6. His comments actually relate to v.10.

5. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p.32. His comments also relate to v.10.

means to be brought into the most intimate relation with this person's revelation"; ¹. Morris: "(The name) stood for the whole personality. It summed up the whole man"; ². Godet: "In the name there is summed up all that is revealed regarding him who bears it, consequently all the titles of his legitimate authority. Baptism is therefore a taking possession of the baptized on the part of the person whose name is invoked over him." ³. Scott manages to sum up the variety in a statement of succinct vagueness: "...the 'name of Christ' means Christ as He is known, Christ and all that He stands for, Christ in His total relation to men". ⁴.

Now, there are phrases in any language which defy precise delineation, and εἰς τὸ ὄνομα could be one of those. The wide variety of interpretations from commentators could be considered to bear this out. However, we must try to discover, as far as possible, Paul's meaning for this context. One way to find that meaning could be through a knowledge of the background to the phrase.

In this respect we have two options. The first is the Semitic background, based on the Hebrew בשם.

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1. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.39.
 2. Morris, *op cit.*, p.42.
 3. F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans., A. Cusin, I (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), p.81.
 4. Scott, Christianity According to St Paul, p.115.

Unfortunately, it may be the varied nature of this background which is mainly responsible for the varied interpretations of the commentators. Beasley-Murray is speaking conservatively when he says the Hebrew meaning behind **שׁוּב** is "elastic".¹ In the Old Testament, the name simply could mean the person, as at Lev.24:11 where God is referred to as 'the Name'. Or, again, the name could represent the character of the person - in the case of Yahweh that might mean his power, holiness, wrath and grace. Something of this sense seems to be present in the Psalmist's telling forth of 'the name' of Yahweh (Ps.22:22). Another aspect of the use of the name could be to convey a sense of the presence of the person. In 1 Kings this is expressed in one way in the contest of the names at Mount Carmel (18:24ff.) where the presence as well as the power of the deities was at stake. Another way comes over in 1 Samuel where a prophet who spoke in the name of God brought God's message, and therefore spoke on the authority of God (18:19ff.).²

Rabbinic usage is every bit as varied as that of the Old Testament. Billerbeck identifies three distinct uses of **שׁוּב**. One sense is used in the practice of baptizing heathen slaves either in the name of slavery

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.92.

2. For a more detailed, yet still reasonably concise, outline of the O.T. use of 'name' in these terms, see J.A. Motyer, art. 'Name', New Bible Dictionary, ed., J.D. Douglas (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962), pp.862-3.

or freedom when joining or leaving a Jewish home. This would involve using $\nu\psi$ to mean 'participation in'. Billerbeck describes a second sense which concerned the slaughtering of a sacrifice: "...auf den Namen des (betreffenden) Opfers...auf den Namen des Opfernden... auf den Namen Gottes...auf den Namen von Feueropfern... auf den Namen des Wohlgeruchs (vor Gott) u. auf den Namen des Wohlgefallens (vor Gott)".¹ This example carries a general sense of 'with respect to'. Finally he cites that a Samaritan may not circumcise an Israelite because the circumcision of the Samaritans is in the name of Mount Gerizim - in other words, 'on the authority' of the God who is worshipped at Mount Gerizim.

This Semitic background to $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha$ does not seem, at first sight, very helpful because it offers no specific meaning to the phrase. This may be one factor which has encouraged a few to champion an alternative derivation of this phrase from the commercial life of the Hellenistic world, where it conveyed the idea of charging to an account over which stands the name of the owner.² Dunn, among modern writers, holds

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1. H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament (aus Talmud und Midrasch), I (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926), p.1055. The comments occur with respect to Mt.28:19.
 2. See H. Bietenhard, art. $\delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha$, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed., G. Kittel, V (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p.275.

this view:

"...the regular use of the phrase εἰς τὸ ὄνομα in contemporary transactions had the meaning, 'to the account of'. Since Corinth was a city whose very life depended on trade and commerce this meaning of the phrase must inevitably have coloured the Corinthians' understanding of vv.13-15." 1.

However, we may not wish to put a great deal of weight on this view. For one thing, would those particular Corinthians, whom Paul did not consider to be wise by worldly standards (1:26), so "inevitably" understand this phrase in the light of commercial terminology? It is possible, but hardly "inevitable". In any case it is not likely that Paul intended the phrase that way. As we shall find with our next baptismal passage (10:2), Paul, the former Pharisee, was not loathe to borrow from Hebraic tradition and terminology even when writing to the Corinthians. With this very Hebraic phrase, it does not seem most probable that Paul consciously employed it with a sense borrowed from Hellenistic commercial life. The sheer weight of the Semitic background to the phrase must predispose us to think that something of that background was in Paul's mind. In the LXX, as Bietenhard points out, ὄνομα occurs in over 1000 verses (of which some 100 are in the Apocrypha). 2. If we add to that the obvious frequency of the phrase in general use (as evidenced by the Rabbinic examples), the predominance of this background for Paul over the sig-

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.117.

2. See Bietenhard, op. cit., p.261.

nificance of the Hellenistic commercial sense seems very considerable.¹ As Bietenhard says: "Since the formula can be shown to have a Semitic origin, its derivation from popular Hellenistic usage is improbable".²

Generally, then, there is not strong evidence in favour of an interpretation taken from the Hellenistic trading world.

The problem with the Hebraic background material was its varied nature. However, it may be that a recognition of Paul's language as metaphorical may guide us to his meaning.

One of the principles of metaphorical language we have used before is to allow the metaphor to speak its own message, but also for that to be shaped by, or harmonized with, its context. Wheelwright, we noted before, recognised a two-fold influence on the meaning of a word - the generally accepted sense, and the meaning governed by the particular context.³ This must be our principle for study here. Treating this sentence as a metaphorical statement we shall try to find its unique insight into the meaning of baptism, its particular way

1. But the frequency of usage in a Semitic context does not compel us to accept Conzelmann's depreciating of $\epsilon\kappa$ as a "mere prepositional phrase". Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, fn., p.35. His only justification for this is that $\epsilon\kappa$ does not convey anything of the saying of a real name which, in his opinion, is implied in v.13c.

2. Bietenhard, op. cit., p.275.

3. See above, p.100.

of looking at the subject. But that insight must conform to the general sense of this whole passage, it must fit the flow of the argument and logic.

The beginning of that process normally involves deciding on the meaning of the word used as the metaphor. We saw at the outset that one word which was metaphorical was ὄνομα. It is an odd word in the sentence, because to speak of baptism 'into a name' is not sense by the rules of literal language. But it is here that we found our great difficulty, that of pinpointing which meaning of 'name' could be appropriate to this context. In actual fact, all we can do is allow the reference to ὄνομα to point us toward the picture Paul is evoking - not to fall into the trap, as do those who fail to recognise metaphorical language, of expecting the word to convey a definitive meaning. The result of the latter approach we have seen - each picks a different definitive meaning! This is evocative language, the language of metaphor. It serves to stimulate and arouse a feeling for the meaning. More than that should not be expected from it.

Out of the breadth of the Semitic background, Bietenhard gives us a direction to look in. He points out: "εἰς τὸ ὄνομα" has a final sense".¹ He means that with that phrase Jewish sacrifices and baths were "for a specific end or with a particular inten-

1. Bietenhard, op. cit., p.275.

tion...".¹ Schnackenburg agrees: "It indicated to what purpose an ablution took place".² What we are to look for from εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, therefore, is the sense of being given a goal resulting from baptism.

From that point we look at the surrounding words for clues by which we may firm up the meaning. After ὄνομα comes the name of Paul. We know that Paul's name is only here as a substitute for Christ, but what is equally significant is that the goal of this baptism is a person. It is not a baptism for the forgiveness of sins or any other such impersonal object. The "specific end" to which this baptism refers is a person - in reality for Paul, that end is Christ. Preceding ὄνομα is the preposition εἰς and we may recall our study of this when looking at Rom.6:3.³ There we found general agreement that in the epistles of the New Testament (and Mt. and Rev.) there was no confusion between εἰς and ἐν. Each had a distinctive meaning, and Zerwick says that εἰς after βαπτίζω seems "to suggest the end and effect of baptism...".⁴ That force must therefore be allowed to the preposition here. So Bruce concludes that 'in Christ's name' would be more accurately rendered

1. Bietenhard, op. cit., p.275.

2. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.20.

3. See above, pp.130ff.

4. Zerwick, Biblical Greek, p.35.

'into Christ's name'. ¹. And we find Bietenhard going so far as to say: "Materially εἰς τὸ ὄνομα is equivalent to the simple εἰς ". ².

The final word in the sentence is, of course, ἐβαπτίσθητε. We have seen in other contexts (Rom.6:3 and Gal.3:27) that a meaning of 'immersed' was demanded, in addition to being a reference to the act of baptism. Such a meaning was necessary because a qualifier, Χριστόν, was attached in each case which stimulated βαπτίσω in such a way that it could not have just a literal meaning but had to be metaphorical. Does this happen here? Is there a qualifier forcing us also to take ἐβαπτίσθητε as metaphorical? The phrase which surrounds the verb is εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου. We have said already that ὄνομα is metaphorical itself, but there is no reason why another metaphor should not serve as a qualifier (and that was what we discovered to be happening before, especially in Col.2:11). To speak of baptizing into the name of a person is not only to use the word 'name' unusually, but also to place the verb in an odd context. The qualifier reveals a certain strangeness in the use of the verb, and it is this which tells us to treat βαπτίσω metaphorically. When studying Rom.6 we saw this strangeness partly by comparison with Acts 8:12. ³.

1. F.F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians (London: Oliphants, 1971), p.33.

2. Bietenhard, op. cit., p.275.

3. See above, p.124.

In that passage the language is very simple. It tells what the people heard and then says *ἐβαπτίσοντο*. There is no qualifier, no reason to be pulled up short regarding the meaning intended. But there is impropriety of language in our verse here, for Paul does not simply ask them if they have been baptized. Rather that baptism is related directly to *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου*. It is not any baptism, but a baptism whose meaning is couched in metaphor. Something, therefore, of that fuller sense of *βαπτίσω* as 'immersion' must also be allowed here. ¹.

These pieces of the metaphorical jigsaw we must now put together and see what picture emerges:

a) the Corinthians, in their baptism, were immersed in a metaphorical as well as physical sense;

b) the *εἰς* confirms that there is a definite locus for that immersion;

c) the locus is 'the name', but that goal is not sufficient. The use of the name is also metaphorical,

1. Some may ponder whether a metaphorical sense needs to be given to *βαπτίσω* here when, in nearby verses, Paul clearly uses the same word literally - vv.14, 16, 17. However, that rather strengthens the metaphorical interpretation of v.13. Paul knew how to use *βαπτίσω* in a straightforward, literal sense. But in v.13 he chose to link it with other words in such a way as to get more 'mileage' from the word than its literal meaning. In v.13 the word is not a 'label' but an evocative phrase. This reminds us of the need to chart carefully the nature of the language before us at any moment, and not to assume that the same word will be used on the same logical level at every point of its occurrence. This was the need for what we called earlier, in Ramsey's expression, "logical mapping". See above, p.45.

used to describe the specific end to which that immersion is effected. In other words, *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* points us yet further forward;

d) *Παύλου*, the absurd substitute for the purposes of the argument for *Χριστοῦ*, reveals a personal goal. The immersion spoken of regarding the Corinthians' baptism is one into the person of Paul.¹

So Bruce writes: "To be baptized into the name of Christ is hardly distinguishable from being 'baptized into Christ' (Gal.3.27; cf. Rom.6.3), i.e. being incorporated into him (cf. 1 C.12.13)."² And Bietenhard says: "If he uses *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* in 1 C.1:13, 15 it might be that he is asking: "Were you baptised into the person (*ὄνομα* = person) of Paul?" "That none might say he was baptised into my person.""³

In what sense is this a metaphorical interpretation of the verse? It is so in two ways. Firstly, 'name' is not used in its literal sense. No 'naming of the name' is meant at all. This is baptism into the name, not baptism using the name. Therefore a metaphorical understanding of the meaning must be reached. Secondly, since that points on to a goal of the person of Paul,

1. We may recall that the use of the name to represent the person was a feature in O.T. usage. To find it used here in this way is therefore not a matter for surprise - if anything it is one of the most common meanings from the use of the name.

2. Bruce, op. cit., p.33.

3. Bietenhard, op. cit., p.275.

no literal sense can be made of the expression 'to be baptized into the person of Paul'. The meaning must be metaphorical and the metaphor we find, as elsewhere, to be one of immersion. Those baptized are immersed into - and thereby united with - the person of Paul.

Two tests remain - to ensure that the metaphorical picture which emerges is harmonious with other pictures painted nearby by Paul, and to ensure that this picture 'fits' the flow of the argument, that is, that this picture helps achieve the end to which Paul is pressing.

Our picture is one of immersion into the person of Paul by baptism. Of course, in reality for Paul such a close union was forged in baptism only with Christ. So does such a picture as that - a close union with Christ - fit nearby pictures? It certainly seems to, for as we noted the phrase *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* occurs nearby, and that can be taken to be Paul's most common expression to sum up the relationship with Christ entered into by such a baptism. And, as we also found earlier, the question *μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός;* is based on the existence of a close union between the Corinthian Christians and the person of Christ. Our first test - the test of harmony among the images - is therefore fulfilled.

What, then, of the flow of Paul's argument? First of all we should apply in this context what we might call the 'absurdity test'. All of Paul's questions in this verse were to be instantly horrifying and outrageous to

the Corinthians. On that basis the suggestion that in their baptism they were united with Paul passes with flying colours. They were not immersed into Paul. Allegiance to him they could give - even a measure of discipleship. But there was no question of an intimate union. He asks: εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; and would expect their hands to go up in horror at the thought.¹ Secondly, we must see how this question fits the series in v.13. The first question pointed out the oneness of the one to whom they belonged, with whom they were united. The second question pointed out who it was that had died for them. The third question points out that it was that same one, that unique Christ, with whom in baptism they formed an intimate relationship. Solely with him - the one Christ, the only one to die for them - had they been joined by their baptism. The three questions could be considered as three stages in the Corinthians' Christian experience. One concerns their awareness of what Christ and he alone had done for them by being crucified on their behalf - the message

1. Many commentators mention that in some mystery cults of the day the initiate honoured the priest or mystagogue who initiated him as his 'father'. It is said that Paul's emphasis in vv.14-17 on how few he had baptized reveals that while in Corinth he tried to avoid being treated in that way. Yet, considering that Paul claims to be their 'father' through the gospel (4:15), he does not seem to be unduly afraid of that term. Such a relationship was not unthinkable to Paul (though, of course, that need not mean he thought of it in the light of the mystery religions' ideas). Therefore it cannot be what he is speaking of in ch.1, and certainly not in v.13 where he is dealing, not with a by-product relationship from the baptism, but the central feature - a close union with Christ (but, for the purpose of being absurd, using his own name).

Paul says he brought to them. Another says that it is to this Christ and him alone that they have been joined by their baptism. And another concerns the relationship already established, probing why the outworking of that relationship was not happening. Of course, viewing these questions as stages has the difficulty of not matching the sequence in which they are put down. Rather than the 1 - 2 - 3 sequence we now have, a rearrangement to 2 - 3 - 1 would need to be made. Many commentators point out that Paul's sudden remembering in v.16 about baptizing Stephanas and his household suggests that he was dictating this letter to an amanuensis. Given the likelihood that he was dictating - and that he was emotionally caught up in what he was saying - the questions of v.13 are no doubt simply set down as the thoughts came into Paul's mind. For our purpose the point which matters is this: the questions, with the metaphorical interpretation we have given to the third, all belong very well together.

Thus we find once more that in a baptismal context Paul's choice of language is metaphorical. The metaphor is again one of immersion, by implication into the person of Christ. Without appreciating that the language is metaphorical the pictured relationship with Christ cannot properly be seen.

CHAPTER VIII

I CORINTHIANS 10:2

Certainly from the time of Origen, if not earlier, the Christian church has had no difficulty in concocting many a fanciful interpretation of this passage. The varying themes, emphases, allegories, and supposed insights are legion. Even a very brief summary by Beasley-Murray finds theories on an Old Testament baptism, the power of the baptismal water, parallels between the cloud and the Holy Spirit, links with the 'crystal sea' of Rev.15:2, the inclusiveness of children in the baptismal experience, and of the relation of faith to baptism. ¹.

What most of these theories raise is the difficult issue of how to handle passages such as this. That can only come from a proper appreciation of the type of literature before us. Never has the plea for the correct 'logical mapping' been more necessary. We might well wish that the authors of these "strange examples of exegesis" ². had been aware of Bridge's comment, which we noted earlier, that "a proper appreciation of the images must be dependent upon a prior recognition that they are indeed images and not bare facts". ³. In this .

1. See Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, pp.182-4.

2. Ibid., p.182.

3. See above, p.43.

particular passage that must be done in two stages.

Firstly, the nature of the passage generally must be established. Secondly, with that in mind, the type of language used for the specific reference to baptism in v.2 will, as before, be of the greatest moment in order to understand Paul's meaning.

Paul himself gives an answer of sorts to the first of these matters. In v.6 he begins: **ΤΑΥΤΑ ΔΕ ΤΥΠΟΙ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν**, and his words are similar in v.11: **ΤΑΥΤΑ ΔΕ ΤΥΠΙΚΩΣ ΣΥΝΕΒΑΙΝΕΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΥΣ**. With such terminology this passage can obviously, if a little easily, become categorised under the heading of 'typology'. This Ellis defines: "The NT writers see in certain OT persons, or institutions, and events prefigurations of New Covenant truths".¹ To this method Ellis gives a high standing. In contrast to some very unhistorical allegory, this exegetical method has a "historical character".² This he explains: "NT typological exegesis is grounded firmly in the historical significance of the 'types'. Even Pauline 'allegory' rests in a typological framework and is not allegory in the usual Jewish or Hellenistic sense."³ Barrett, however, dealing with this specific passage, would sound

1. E.E. Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), p.126.

2. Ibid., p.127.

3. Ibid.

a slightly different note from Ellis's general statement:

"These verses do not mean that there was a precise equivalence between Moses and Christ, since, though the Fathers are said to have been baptized into Moses, they drew their spiritual drink not from Moses but from Christ himself, with whom the rock was identified (verse 4). Rather, Paul is drawing a general parallel between the situation and events of the Exodus, and the situation and events with which he has to deal in Corinth. That Paul saw a relation between Moses and Christ is undoubtedly true. It would, however, be rash to describe this relation as 'typological' in any precise sense of the word. In this context at least, Paul's word (τύπος) means not 'type' but 'warning example'." 1.

Barrett's modification here is important for, although there is indeed a base in the Exodus story, Paul's argument goes well beyond the precise events of the Exodus.

Dunn says "the whole passage is an illustration", 2. but that statement is only partly useful. It does serve to warn us against reading the New Testament in the Old. One example of doing precisely that comes from Edwards: "The point of these four verses is the real identity of the sacraments under both dispensations. ...(The Old Testament) had real sacraments, and not mere types of sacraments. ...The Christian Church existed under the Old Testament." 3. To counter such statements Conzelmann says: "It should be noted that (Paul's) thought moves back to the Old Testament from the present datum, baptism, and certainly does not vice versa derive and

1. C.K. Barrett, From First Adam to Last (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1962), p.50.

2. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.125.

3. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.246.

interpret baptism from the Old Testament".¹ Dunn amplifies his earlier statement in general agreement with Conzelmann:

"...the Red Sea crossing and the wilderness experiences are only 'sacraments' because they are seen in the light of and draw their significance as 'sacraments' from the spiritual realities of the new age, the Christian era (hence they are written for our instruction, who live in eschatological days). ...For the Israelites these events were not sacraments; they were the events of deliverance naked and simple. But we can regard them as 'sacraments', in the same way as we can regard the Israelites as 'our fathers' (v.1), because their concrete experience of (literal, physical) redemption is an allegory of our concrete experience of (spiritual) redemption."²

However, so far we have in no way specified what type of language Paul is using. We have called it an "illustration" but that only took us so far. What kind of illustration is it? Schnackenburg speaks of "a pictorial midrashic kind of 'parenesis'",³ and, clumsy though that phrase is, it is also quite helpful.

That Paul's language is parenetic is obvious enough from the text. Just before this section he has been warning of the possibility of disqualification from winning the prize at the end of the race. Chapter 10 continues that theme. Morris writes: "The section is closely linked with the preceding. The danger spoken of is not imaginary, as the case of the Israelites in

1. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p.166.

2. Dunn, op. cit., pp.126-7.

3. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.92.

the wilderness demonstrates".¹ Edwards draws attention to the $\gamma\alpha\rho$ in v.1, and says: "It introduces an instance of rejection by God".²

Commentators are divided to some extent regarding Paul's emphasis in this passage. Some stress that Paul is warning against having too much reliance on participation in the 'sacraments'. Barrett heads his section on 10:1-13: "Even Baptized Communicants are not Secure",³ and Hering says:

"...the greatest moral effort is necessary; for the sacraments do not guarantee salvation, as some of the Corinthians think - the spiritual-minded undoubtedly, who were over-confident of their superiority and who, through analogy with the mystery religions, interpreted the Christian sacraments in a magical way".⁴

Others think Paul's exhortations are of a more general nature. Dunn writes:

"...Paul is not addressing those who think that they are Christians because they have participated in the sacraments, but those who are Christians (who have been baptized into Christ and receive spiritual nourishment from Christ), and he is warning them that they may fall. He is contesting not so much a false sacramentalism as failure to persevere and endure." ⁵

Beasley-Murray says the accent in the word $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha\iota$ clearly

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1. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p.140.
 2. Edwards, op. cit., p.243.
 3. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.218.
 4. J. Hering, The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, trans., A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), p.84.
 5. Dunn, op. cit., p.127.

falls on the behaviour of the Fathers and the judgments that befell them, rather than on their participation in the sacraments.¹ He continues that Paul's point all along has been:

"...a plea to avoid plunging weaker brethren back into idolatry, with their consequent loss of the inheritance through thoughtless participation in pagan sacrificial foods and meals. ...Von Dobschutz was justified in protesting long ago that to make Paul's sacramental thought here the point of departure, rather than the Old Testament narrative and its contemporary exegesis, is to transform the literary clothing of the thought into the thing that matters." 2.

Certainly both he and Dunn have a point, for the *Διόπερ* at the beginning of v.14 which indicates that we are about to be given the conclusion that flows from the preceding argument, leads into an injunction to flee from the worship of idols, and not to be *κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων* (v.20). Yet the other point of view is valid too, for Paul's words do militate against a false presumption on the efficacy of baptism or the common meal. Whether or not there were those in Corinth who held a 'magical' view of such 'sacraments', and whether or not such an idea had origins in mystery religion rites, are issues not to the point for our study. We do need to know what clearly comes over in both views

1. See Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, p.182. His justification is the content of v.6b and the sequence leading to the reference to 'example' in v.11.

2. Ibid. The work of von Dobschütz to which he refers is Theologische Studien und Kritiken (1905), pp.10f.

of commentators, that the reference to baptism is once more not mentioned as part of a positive statement on baptism, but only in order to illustrate or demonstrate the truth of something else. However, the fact that Paul felt that baptism could do this does show that it holds a place of some importance in his thought. (The comment of 1:17 is directed only to the issue of who baptizes, and need not be taken to denigrate the significance for Paul of baptism itself.)

As well as describing this passage as parenetic, Schnackenburg also said it was of a "pictorial midrashic kind". Many commentators hold the view that Paul's words arise from a Jewish midrash on Exodus. But they have a near unanimous silence on which midrash, for the fact is that there is none which likens the Red Sea incident to a baptism. Billerbeck does refer to the midrash on Ex.13:21 which speaks of the people being enveloped in the cloud,¹ and the Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael on Ex.14:16-21 describes that scene as a breaking through of the sea which was made like a vault.² These traditions perhaps go some way to answering such a commentator as Héring who worries about the fact that there is no mention in the Exodus narrative of passing through the cloud, and the whole point of the crossing story

1. Strack and Billerbeck, Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament, III (1926), pp.405f.

2. Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, trans., J.Z. Lauterbach, I (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933), p.223.

is that the people remained dry, all of which is rather unlike a baptism.¹ However, on a 'baptism' at the Red Sea there is silence,² and that, naturally, means there is no reference to link Moses and baptism in this incident. Billerbeck says nothing on this aspect, diverting attention to comments on Mt.28:19,³ and other commentators are agreed on the lack of any Jewish background to Paul's link between Moses and baptism: Ruef: "There is no Jewish parallel to this construction";⁴ Héring: "... 'into Moses' cannot be explained by Judaism";⁵ Schnackenburg: "This particular phrase has not been traced in Jewish-Rabbinic sources";⁶ Barrett: "It seems to be impossible either to parallel or to explain this phrase on the basis of Jewish sources".⁷ That leaves only one source for such a conception. Barrett says: "For this addition, then,

1. Héring asks: "How can there be baptism without contact with the water, which God expressly drew aside?" Op. cit., p.85.

2. Not even centuries later material on proselyte baptism helps, since the baptism in the wilderness is then Ex.19:10 (consecration at Mount Sinai) and not the cloud and sea incident here. See T.F. Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," New Testament Studies, I (1954-55), p.150.

3. Strack and Billerbeck, Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament, III, pp.405f.

4. J.S. Ruef, Paul's First Letter to Corinth (London: Penguin Books, 1971), p.90.

5. Héring, op. cit., p.86.

6. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.93.

7. Barrett, From First Adam to Last, p.49.

with its specific and honorific reference to Moses, Paul himself was responsible", ^{1.} and on Barrett's view there is general agreement.

And there is similar agreement on how the phrase εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν has been constructed: "Baptism 'to Moses' is modelled on baptism 'to Christ' (εἰς Χριστόν)". ^{2.} Paul, used to the expression εἰς Χριστόν after βαπτίζω, takes the story of the exodus and constructs a parallel expression regarding Moses.

"...Paul is not saying that the Israelites were really baptized, far less that they were baptized into Moses or into a relation with Moses or a loyalty to Moses. He is rather thinking of the Christian's baptism into Christ and using the Exodus as an illustration of the Christian's incorporation into Christ." ^{3.}

Dunn, in making that comment, perhaps runs the risk of seeming to underplay Paul's estimation of the significance of the exodus events, ^{4.} but is surely right in highlighting that in this passage Paul's starting

1. Barrett, From First Adam to Last, p.49.

2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.185. Among those agreed on this in general are: Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p.245; Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p.90; J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925), p.250; Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.221; Hering, op. cit., p.86; Goudge, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.83; Ruef, op. cit., p.90; Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.93; Best, One Body in Christ, p.72; H. Lietzmann, An Die Korinther I.II (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1923), p.46.

3. Dunn, op. cit., pp.125-6.

4. Ellis viewed such references for Paul as "reaching to the heart of the Gospel". Op. cit., p.133.

point is baptism into Christ and that the Old Testament narrative is phrased accordingly.

An important distinction has now become clear. What Paul is not doing is taking an existing Jewish midrash on baptism and explaining the significance of Christian baptism from that. In other words, this passage is not an interpretation of a piece of Jewish tradition. What Paul is doing is constructing a short passage in the style of a midrash, using the setting of Moses and the people of Israel at the Red Sea. His purpose in doing this is to illustrate something of the meaning of Christian baptism. Hence Schnackenburg was right to call this language of a "midrashic kind". Hence Dunn is right to call this a "sort of Christian 'midrash'".¹

The most important consequence of that distinction relates to the matter of interpretation. There is little point in examining the Exodus narrative in order from it to interpret the passage in Corinthians. Robertson and Plummer are correct with a general statement: "Throughout the paragraph, the incidents are chosen from the Pentateuch with a view to parallels with the condition of the Corinthian Christians".² Paul is 'calling

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.126.

2. Robertson and Plummer, First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, p.200. We are not saying here that there are no points of comparison (as we shall see later) - rather we are making clear from which 'direction' interpretation must come (i.e., from the NT to the OT).

the tune' as regards the interpretation - not the Old Testament. Thus, among the commentators who accept the origin of βαπτίζω εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν in βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστὸν, there is general agreement with Beasley-Murray who says: "...the latter is the clue to understanding the former, not vice versa".¹ He also says:

"...it is obvious that Paul frames his language about the baptism and the eucharist of the Fathers at the Exodus and in the desert from their Christian counterparts. The pattern of baptism here is not the Red Sea passage but baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, which is made a category into which the Exodus is set and by which it is interpreted."²

Because of this the baptismal formula 'into Christ', as Barrett warns, "ought not to be explained on the basis of the present passage".³ This is a midrash on a piece of Old Testament material, done, as Schnackenburg put it, in a "pictorial" way, to illustrate something of the Corinthians' baptismal experience.

Having now gone through the essential procedure of determining both Paul's purpose in writing and the nature of the language, we have reached a position where it would seem we cannot use this passage to interpret Christian baptism. It would then appear that there is no more to say. However, just because the Old Testament example quoted may not be used to interpret Christian

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.185.

2. Ibid., p.184. It should be noted that Beasley-Murray's reference to "baptism in the name..." has no direct basis in this passage.

3. Barrett, From First Adam to Last, fn., p.49.

thought does not mean that it cannot help us to understand more clearly what such thought was for Paul. If this midrashic passage is constructed as a reflection of Paul's view of baptism, then that reflection, as any reflection, can still tell us quite a considerable amount about the original. Obviously caution is necessary - it is only a reflection. Due account must also be given to the parenetic nature of the passage. And care must be exercised because of the midrashic type of language employed. But recognition having been given to these factors, some positive statements about baptism may still be made.

The first thing we must do is define the language status of the central phrase about baptism, εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσαντο.¹ (This is the task of 'logical mapping' which we have sought to do with each reference

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1. It is recognised that the third edition of the Greek NT, as published by the United Bible Societies, forsakes the middle in favour of the passive. It is said: "On the basis of what was taken to be superior evidence and Pauline usage, a majority of the Committee preferred the reading ἐβαπτίσθησαν". B.M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), p.559. (The minority opted for the middle on the basis of a less probable alteration by copyists.) The different implication given by the middle could be significant, e.g., in a study of the mode of baptism, but is of no significance for us. In any case, Conzelmann warns: "Caution is called for in assessing the middle, since the use of the language has lost its precision and the sense is determined not so much by the formal rules of grammar as by the actual process of baptism". Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, fn., p.164.

to baptism.) This reference - especially if *Χριστὸν* should really be in mind rather than *Μωϋσῆν* - has a structure very similar to that which we found in Rom.6 and Gal.3. There is the verb *βαπτίζω*. Had that occurred on its own we should have presumed Paul was simply referring to the act of baptism - a literal use of *βαπτίζω* in other words. But, once again, it is the qualifier which forces us to adopt a metaphorical understanding also. The effect of *εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν* is to 'push' the meaning of the verb until we realise that something beyond a merely literal reference is being made. These words would not have appeared if nothing more than a statement that the people of Israel had undergone an act of baptism was being said. But their presence adds a particular significance to baptism. Paul is once more painting a picture. This time he uses Moses and the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea, and he does so to say something about Christ and the Corinthians. Paul, then, could be said to be employing a metaphorical midrash.

Next we must define what the metaphor is. That would seem to involve saying something about the relationship between Moses and the Israelites. Here the permutations of words discovered by the commentators is impressive: "...our fathers were baptized into loyalty to Moses...their divinely appointed leader and mediator"; ¹. 'baptized unto Moses' means "in reference

1. Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p.129.

to Moses, so as by baptism to be made his disciples"; ¹. "Baptized for Moses... By ranging themselves under the cloud and passing through the sea, they formally placed themselves in a new relationship to Moses as His followers"; ². "'They received baptism unto Moses,' as a sign of allegiance to him and trust in him; or 'into Moses,' as a pledge of union with him"; ³. "By following their God-given leader with confidence at that critical moment, they were closely united to, and, as it were, incorporated with Moses to become his people..."; ⁴. "...all received baptism into the fellowship of Moses... The experience of the Exodus from Egypt made them into a community owing loyalty to Moses as its leader"; ⁵. "Baptism into Moses can mean only 'into his leadership'..."; ⁶. "'They were baptized to Moses' (εἰς τὸν Μωσῆν)". ⁷. This variety of meaning largely exists

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1. Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.172.
 2. J.A. Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), p.161.
 3. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p.200.
 4. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, II (1893), p.53.
 5. M.E. Thrall, The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p.73.
 6. Bruce, op. cit., p.90.
 7. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.185.

because of the general failure to perceive the metaphor. For many of these comments reflect an attempt to state a relationship between the Israelites and Moses in literal terms, with an appropriate degree of precision. But metaphors cannot be translated precisely. A picture can be described and put into some words, but let no-one imagine that the impression given by such description is the same as that evoked by the picture. This is a metaphor with its own kind of precision and translating it will only lose for us the picture that is there.

Of course, as we have done before, we can see the different elements which go to make up the picture, as a means to a better appreciation of it. Naturally, because the metaphor is a derivative of βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν these elements will basically be the same as those we found in Rom.6 and Gal.3.

Firstly, there is the metaphor itself, ἐβαπτίσαντο. The general metaphorical meaning is one of sinking, plunging, immersion. No matter whether the passive or middle is preferred, a similar metaphorical image is evoked.¹ Secondly, because this is again a New Testament letter, εἰς is to be given "its full

1. Despite his warning (see above, fn., p.265) regarding the imprecision of the language, Conzelmann makes an interesting point should this verb be in the middle: "...it may well be that we here catch a glimpse of the paraenetic purpose. They had themselves baptized, and afterwards changed their minds again. Take warning!" Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, fn., p.164.

sense".¹ By that is meant 'into', leading on to the end and effect of baptism. There is a definite goal to this baptism and εἰς conveys that sense. Edwards writes: "All other renderings of εἰς, such as "under the leadership of," "through"..., "having confidence in"..., are grammatically and exegetically inadmissible".² Thirdly, what is the goal of this immersion? The answer is Moses. Once more it is a baptism into a person that Paul speaks of, this time substituting Μωϋσῆν for Χριστὸν as he did with his own name at the beginning of the letter. This substitution leaves a baptismal metaphor of immersion into Moses.

This idea is another source of trouble among the commentators, that is, among those who realise that a union of some sort is Paul's meaning: Morris: "They were united to him, though we should not press this as though any other union can be anything like as close as the union between the Christian and the Christ";³ Goudge recognises that Christians come into "corporate union" with Christ in baptism, but is afraid of any such terminology here: "The connection formed by the Israelites with Moses was far less close; they did, however, in crossing the Red Sea, perform an act of faith

1. Turner, see above, p.131.

2. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.244.

3. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p.141.

in his divine mission, acknowledge him as their leader, and begin a new life that was to be ruled by that faith".¹.

If the variety about the meaning existed because of the general failure to perceive the metaphor, then this fear about the meaning exists because of the failure to perceive the nature of a metaphor, and this one in particular. Literal language is the language of measurable precision. But when a metaphor is being used - as often it must, since literal language cannot speak of some matters - that type of precision is never intended. An image is evoked with usually only one or two details given. It is not a complete representation of the subject in question. The details supplied are sufficient in the writer's opinion to convey his meaning by that metaphor to his reader. As we said towards the end of our study of Rom.6,² it simply is not open to the reader to fill in the remaining details in order to satisfy curiosity regarding the finer points of the matter. In this image of baptism into Moses, an image with very few details is being supplied by Paul. For us now to ask questions of degrees of closeness is to be thinking literally about a metaphor; in other words, the questions being asked are quite inappropriate to the language-type before us. Additionally, we should

1. Goudge, op. cit., pp.83-4.

2. See above, pp.167ff.

say that, especially in this instance, the whole issue of whether or not the Israelites were really united to Moses is false. General agreement has been given that Paul is truly speaking of the Corinthians and Christ, and he constructs his phraseology regarding the Israelites and Moses accordingly. Therefore, the only relationship where any issue regarding the degree of closeness could exist is between the Corinthians and Christ. As Barrett said, there is no need to think there was any "precise equivalence between Moses and Christ", ¹ nor is there any equivalence in reality between the two sets of relationships of which Paul speaks (Israelites to Moses, and Corinthians to Christ). This is midrashic material. It defies the laws of 20th century commentary. Paul never knew those laws and therefore never worried about how close a relationship might be thought to exist between the Israelites and Moses.

There is one fairly obvious question remaining. Why did Paul choose this incident on which to build his midrash to parallel the Corinthians' baptism? As Schnackenburg says, "...such a comparison would not be possible unless something common existed between baptism and the Lord's Supper and the events of the wilderness wanderings". ² This event from the exodus may have been chosen in order to illustrate the situation of

1. See above, p.256.

2. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.92.

the Corinthians - but why this event?

Is Schnackenburg correct with either of the two grounds of comparison he puts forward? One he says is the view of most exegetes, that baptism into Moses and Christian baptism have as their tertium comparationis the 'enveloping' of the Israelites by the cloud and the sea, believed to be a suitable correspondence to baptism by immersion. The other view, which Schnackenburg obviously prefers, is to regard the passage through the Red Sea as:

"...an act of divine grace, an act of divine deliverance. Christian baptism is nothing less than that. Only the threatening destruction is not physical ruin but eternal perdition. The controlling conception that makes this comparison possible is that of 'means of redemption'. We thereby gain a valuable outlook on Paul's teaching on baptism..." 1.

However, both these views miss the central point of the metaphor used by Paul. 2. They take the 'surroundings' of the metaphor as if they were the main feature. It is bad appreciation which concentrates on the background of a picture while neglecting the foreground characters. The foreground of this midrash is the metaphorical phrase: πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσαντο. And the central feature of that metaphor is that it speaks of a relationship established, a

1. Schnackenburg, op. cit., pp.93-4.

2. It might be possible to argue that in v.1 of ch.10 Paul thinks of the Exodus narrative as a salvation event. But it is not that aspect which is to the fore in v.2.

oneness with Moses.¹ This becomes clear when it is realised that had Paul wanted to highlight anything else he need not have mentioned Moses. If the cloud and sea were his chief interest, then v.2 could have read καὶ πάντες ἐβαπτίσαντο ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ. If the event as a 'means of redemption' were his main thought, the verse could again have omitted all reference to Moses, and perhaps had 'redemption', 'deliverance', or 'salvation' as an impersonal goal of the baptism. On either of these interpretations Moses would be a redundant figure. But, in fact, the 'reflection' of Christian baptism given here has a personal goal for the baptism - this is immersion into a person. Paul pictures the baptism of the people of Israel in terms of a union, a oneness, coming about with Moses. The emphasis in this baptism is on the intimate relationship established. In reality for the Corinthians, of course, that relationship is with Christ, but in the midrash it is between the Israelites and Moses. In order to speak of baptism as establishing this relationship, Moses is entirely necessary to the midrash.

Aware now, then, that Paul's particular concern in

1. It is the relationship established in baptism (as we are about to state) which is important for Paul here, and therefore Barrett and Schnackenburg unnecessarily compare Christ and Moses by referring to the Jewish belief that the 'latter Redeemer' (the Messiah) would be as the 'former Redeemer' (Moses). Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.221; Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.93.

the midrash is with the relationship between the people and Moses, what was it about the Red Sea incident which attracted Paul to use it?

An examination of the Exodus narrative shows certain features which might have been in Paul's mind:

a) the Israelites did not deserve deliverance on their own merit. Ex.14:10ff. relates how the people protested they had been brought out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. That there is nothing especially good in the non-Christian is certainly part of Paul's theology (e.g., Rom.5:6ff.). In this letter this is clear when Paul contrasts what the Corinthians were like before and after becoming Christians (e.g., 1:26ff; 4:7; 6:9ff.);

b) the righteousness of Moses. Ex.14:13-14, in contrast to the people's lack of faith, tells of Moses' faith and trust in the Lord to deliver them. Moses is the faithful one. That Christ is the righteous one for Paul hardly need be said (e.g., 2 Cor.5:21; Rom.5:18ff.), and is described that way in 1:30;

c) the decision to obey Moses by passing through the water with the eventual result that they came to have faith in the Lord and Moses. In the LXX, Ex.14:31c reads: καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Θεῷ , καὶ Μωυσῇ τῷ θεράποντι αὐτοῦ. The importance for Paul of faith in Christ likewise needs no elaboration here (see, e.g., Rom.3:21ff; 4:1-5:1; Gal.3:6-14).

Whether Paul's purpose in this passage is to use

the experience of the Israelites as a warning to the Corinthians against a false reliance on 'sacraments', or to use their overthrow in the wilderness as a more general warning against idolatry, he needed to put the people of Israel into a situation which somehow matched that of the Corinthians. Part of that involved constructing a parallel baptism for them. Considerations such as those just outlined in the Red Sea story allowed Paul to use that incident for his purposes. As we have already indicated, we do not need to imagine that Paul really considered the people to have been baptized into Moses. But particular facets of the story allow him to speak in this way. They were unrighteous - Moses was not. They at first lacked faith - Moses trusted God. Therefore deliverance was only deservedly of Moses, and yet it happened also for the people. They did not merit it, but it was true for them nevertheless. This allows the suggestion (important for the understanding of Christian baptism) that the Israelites must have been united to Moses for their deliverance to take place. They were carried to safety in Moses, as it were. To convey this, Paul writes of a baptism, an immersion, into Moses.

But, and this is the 'crunch' of his exhortation in this passage, that fact guaranteed nothing for them. Paul can use the story of the people of Israel because, despite that relationship, despite that oneness with Moses, God was still not pleased with them (v.5) because

of their later behaviour (vv.6ff.). They may have been baptized into Moses but that was not sufficient to save them when they chose to pursue idolatry (v.7) and other evils. And the whole point of this 'type' is that the Corinthians are running the same danger. They too have entered into an intimate relationship in baptism, of course with Christ, but unless they shun idolatry (v.14) and the other wrongs, they may fall as the Israelites did (vv.11-12). Their union with Christ in baptism has taken place - so what is true of him is true of them. But they cannot rest on that fact, living carelessly from then on, else they shall experience what Paul guarded against himself, disqualification (becoming ἀδόκιμος, 9:27).

Therefore, what we have in these verses is this: a parenetic passage exhorting the Corinthians to shun immorality and idolatry; a midrash on the events of the exodus as the basis of the parenesis; a metaphorical phrase about baptism as the central feature of the midrash. That metaphor - intended as a reflection of the relationship established in baptism between the Corinthians and Christ - is one of immersion into Moses, a picture of close union.

I CORINTHIANS 12:13

To some this verse is one of the most fruitful in Paul's writings in examining the subject of baptism. To others it is the most fruitless. That radical divergence of appreciation occurs because of the widely varying interpretations which are made of the verse. As always when this happens, the issues become immensely complicated and it is difficult to see what is really important. Our first thought might be to set all other matters aside and look at the verse simply in terms of a study of its metaphors relating to baptism. Unfortunately such a simple procedure is not actually available for, as we shall find, in many instances the difference of opinion regarding the meaning is a difference of opinion concerning whether Paul's language at that point is literal or metaphorical. There are five major issues among commentators in vv.12-13 (the two verses must be taken together) and in all of these such questions of language arise. A full treatment of each issue is neither required nor desirable here. It would involve giving a disproportionate amount of attention to the sense of small sections of only one or two verses in Paul. Our approach must be one which is practical and appropriate for our purposes. As a first stage, we shall set forth in summary form from commentators the 'sides' of each case which pertain to the different

issues, and thereby identify the matters in dispute and something of the arguments put forward. Once that is done, the second stage will seek to put forward an interpretation which specifically tries to use the rules of metaphorical language.

The first issue arises in v.12. There Paul speaks of τὸ σῶμα and of its oneness, even though it has many members. Then he writes: οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός. Bruce points out that the comparison with the body was in Paul's mind before he came to this section, and he draws attention to 6:15, 10:17 and 11:29. "But this is the first place in his extant correspondence where he elaborates the comparison..."¹. Of course σῶμα is the traditional word for a body.² And here we come upon the first issue, which centres on the meanings in v.12 of σῶμα and Χριστός. Ruef states the problem:

1. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, p.120.

2. And is so used frequently in the NT, e.g., of the body of Jesus (Mk.15:43 and parallels). Schweizer makes a study of the frequency of its use in the Pauline letters: "As compared with 18 instances in the other generally accepted letters of Paul σῶμα occurs 56 times in 1 and 2 C.". E. Schweizer, art. σῶμα, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed., G. Friedrich, VII (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p.1063. He gives an explanation for this great frequency in the Corinthian correspondence: "In Corinth Paul came up against a piety in which the chief concern was the spirit, the transformed or liberated inwardness of man. ...In contrast Paul speaks of the body." Op. cit., p.1063. Of course, the vast difference in frequency of usage Schweizer highlights is partly due to the leaving out of certain other epistles which are often not attributed to Paul, but in which the term certainly occurs, especially Ephesians and Colossians. The length of the letters to Corinth compared to most of the rest of the other letters must also be remembered.

"The principal difficulty in this verse is its relation to v.27: you are the body of Christ. If we assume that the idea of v.27 underlies v.12, then body in v.12 probably means 'body of Christ'. However, if this is the case why does Paul end v.12 with a statement about Christ and not a statement about the church? On the other hand, some have recently suggested that v.12 does not depend upon v.27 for its meaning. If this is so, what is the sense of the statements the body is one and the members...are one body?"¹.

And so it is that opinion becomes divided in v.12.

There are those who take this verse metaphorically (even though they do not recognise that they are doing so), and understand either or both of the references to 'body' and 'Christ' to be references to Christians. Hodge explains the phrase 'so also is Christ': "i.e. the body of Christ, or the Church".² Scott speaks similarly of:

"...the bold way in which (Paul) equated Christ with the Church, the Fellowship of Redeemed Men. In 1 Corinthians xii.12 he writes, 'As the human body is one and has many members, all the members of the body forming one body in spite of their number - so also is Christ'; though the conclusion which anyone familiar with Paul's use of the metaphor of the Body and closely following his thought in this context might naturally anticipate would be 'so also is the Church.' Calvin makes indeed this terse comment on the passage, 'he calls Christ the Church.'"³.

Meyer also says that a reference to the church would be the natural completion of the verse, and that the

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1. Ruef, Paul's First Letter to Corinth, p.130.
 2. Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.253.
 3. Scott, Christianity According to St Paul, p.154.

reference to Christ is startling. He continues:

"Diese Wendung ist geradezu ungeheuer. Sie ist, so obenhin besehen, schlechtweg unlogisch. Da, wo wir meinen, Paulus spreche von der Kirche und ihren Teilen und Abteilungen, da springt Paulus plötzlich in eine Betrachtung Christi hinein. Das ist aber nicht mangelhafte logische Gedankenverbindung, sondern eine Durchbruchsstelle eines gewaltigen evangelischen Wissens: Paulus kennt keine von Christus losgelöste Betrachtung der Kirche! Und er kennt auch keine von der Kirche losgelöste Betrachtung Christi!" 1.

Others, however, take the verse literally. When Paul says 'body' he means a body and when he says 'Christ' he means the person of Christ. Edwards says: " Χριστός cannot mean merely the Church...nor does the Apostle speak of Christ simply as head. ...He regards Christ here as the personal subject, the "Ego," whose body is the Church." 2. Among more modern commentators Barrett is keen to retain a sense of the 'otherness' of Jesus from the Christians. He refers to v.27 and says that Christ himself may be said to be a body made up of many members. Then he continues:

"This does not amount to a simple identification of Christ with the body of believers. Such an identification would be unthinkable for Paul, who has just (xii.3) stated, as the principle by which

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1. Meyer, Der erste Brief an die Korinther, II (1945), p.132.
 2. Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.324. He tries to improve Paul's meaning for him, to put it in a "formally more exact" way (and a more modern one): "'As the Person is one while the members of his body are many, so also Christ is one but the members of His mystical body, the Church, are many.' Thinkers in ancient times had a difficulty to express the notion of personality." Op cit., p.325.

the work of the Holy Spirit may be distinguished, the confession, Jesus is Lord; he is Lord over the church, and in this sense eternally distinct from it. Yet men are in the body of Christians only as they are in Christ (Rom.xii.5), and although it is scarcely true to suggest, as Calvin does, that Christ would be 'mutilated in some way, were he to be separated from his members', it is in relation to them that Paul says so also is Christ. Christ however remains always the prototype of the relationship." 1.

So we find two, not entirely distinct but certainly different, views emerging about this verse. The first could happily substitute the word 'church' for 'Christ'. The second does not deny that Paul is giving some thought to Christians, but 'Christ' is principally a personal reference to Jesus.

The second issue revolves around a word of only two letters, ἐν. In v.13 Paul writes ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι and the dispute which arises concerns whether ἐν carries a locative or instrumental sense, that is, whether it means 'in' one Spirit, or 'by' one Spirit. 2. Beasley-Murray considers that English translation and exposition tends to render the ἐν as 'by' while the Continental tradition is for 'in'. 3. This is generally so, although

1. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp.287-8.

2. Schnackenburg divides the issue into three: "It is not unimportant for the interpretation of baptism to determine whether the Spirit is considered as a personal Mediator of unity, or as a common element, or as an effective power. Grammatically ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι permits all these interpretations..." Op. cit., p.27. He is correct, but for present purposes - and for most commentators - his first and last possibilities go together.

3. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.167.

the Revised Version of 1881 and the New English Bible of 1961 are notable exceptions from the 'English' side.

Morris is among those who see a locative meaning here. He likens the construction to that of Mt.3:11, where he takes ἐν ὕδατι and ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ to mean 'with water' and 'with the Holy Ghost'. He continues: "It points to the Spirit as the element 'in' which they were baptized. Those baptized are brought within the sphere of the Spirit." ¹. Robertson and Plummer agree in almost the same words, ². while Ellicott has a rather more unique way of expressing himself by saying ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι "marks the holy and blessed element" in which the outward baptism took place. ³. Bruce says ἐν "does not point to the Spirit as the baptizer, but as the one in whom we were all baptized". ⁴. Dunn argues that an instrumental force for ἐν is almost certainly to be rejected.

"In the NT ἐν with βαπτίζειν never designates the one who performs the baptism; on the contrary, it always indicates the element in which the baptisand is immersed (or with which he is deluged). ...And in each of the six other passages which speak of Spirit-baptism (Matt.3.11; Mark 1.8; Luke 3.16; John 1.33; Acts 1.5; 11.16) the Spirit is the

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1. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p.174.
 2. See Robertson and Plummer, First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, p.272.
 3. C.J. Ellicott, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1887), p.237.
 4. Bruce, op. cit., p.120.

element used in the Messiah's baptism in contrast to the water used in John's baptism." 1.

Others are just as convinced that an instrumental usage is intended. Orr and Walther side-step complicated argument to reach their interpretation of 'by' one Spirit. They liken this instance to v.3 and therefore claim that "linguistic precision must yield to exegetical refinement". 2. Flemington considers that the baptism spoken of was "the work of God's Spirit", an initial act "done through the agency of the Spirit". 3. Ruef employs similar vocabulary, saying that while the reference to Christian initiation is obvious enough in the term 'baptized', most commentators do not see "that the agent in this Baptism is the Spirit". 4. And Grosheide says:

"Baptism receives significance only if there is an activity of the Spirit, hence the addition: in one Spirit. Paul does not imply that baptism incorporates into the body of Christ, but he writes that all are baptized by one Spirit (cf. Mt.3:11), unto one body, i.e., that incorporation does not depend on the administration of baptism but on the work of the Spirit." 5.

Schnackenburg believes the only route to an answer to this problem of the role of the Spirit is through an

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1. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.128.
 2. Orr and Walther, 1 Corinthians, p.277.
 3. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, pp.56-7.
 4. Ruef, op. cit., p.131.
 5. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.293.

examination of the context:

"In vv.4-11 the bestowal of the charismata through the Spirit is described; but according to the triadic statement in vv.4-6 they are regarded as a distribution of various ministries through the one Lord and as an operation of one and the same God Himself. The Spirit appears as a personal Agent (cf. especially v.11 *καθὼς βούλεται*)..." 1.

Later he also writes:

"... *πνεῦμα* is not a 'sphere' or a (symbolically conceived) 'element', into which the baptized is 'immersed', rather He is the power that builds up and quickens the Body of Christ. In that all the baptized receive the divine power that flows through all, they all become one 'body' through this power (*ἐν* instrumental)." 2.

As often happens when opinions are sharply divided, there is someone who tries to sit on the fence. Beasley-Murray, seeing strength in both sides, argues for a central position. He believes 6:11 and the immediately preceding verses here suggest the agency of the Spirit. But he also recalls baptism *ἐν ὕδατι*, and how at 10:2 baptism *ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ* conveys a sense of the element in which baptism takes place. He extricates himself from the predicament thus: "Basically the meaning is not greatly affected, since on the one interpretation the Spirit is viewed as the Agent of baptism to membership in the Body and on the other He is the element in which one is baptized so as to be in the Body". 3.

1. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.27.

2. Ibid., p.29.

3. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.167.

The third matter of contention is not unlike the first, but this time concerns the word $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ in v.13. The issue is not the same as before, for the context in which $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ appears is different and must naturally be taken into account in assessing the meaning of the verse. Schnackenburg points this out, and opens up the problem for us:

"Is the corresponding v.12a purely a comparison, so that the baptized become a single Body, a 'Body of Christ' (v.27), which may be considered as an organism similar to the natural body? Or is the 'one Body' a reality that already exists, namely the 'Body of Christ' (v.27), and are the baptized incorporated into the already existing Body of Christ? Grammatically the question is to be posed thus: Has $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ here a consecutive meaning, does it denote the result of the event, or is it the local $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$?" 1.

Ruef manages to put the matter succinctly: "At the risk of over-simplification, we might say that one extreme states that we belong to Christ because we are members of his body (the church), and that the other extreme asserts that we can speak of ourselves as members of his body because we belong to Christ (by faith)". 2.

There is certainly a strong grouping of opinion in favour of taking $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ here as a collective, equivalent in meaning to the church. This line is particularly favoured by commentators of some years ago, for example, Beet: "They were made by baptism members of an outward and visible community which has a oneness similar to

1. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.26.

2. Ruef, op. cit., p.130.

that of a human body"; ¹. Hodge: "Unto one body means so as to constitute one body (εἰς, unto, expressing the result). No matter how great may have been the previous difference, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, by this baptism of the Spirit, all who experience it are merged into one body..."; ². Edwards likewise paraphrases εἰς ἓν σῶμα: "so as to form one body"; ³. Robertson and Plummer give exactly the same paraphrase, ⁴. and describe the church as "an organic body, an organized society...". ⁵. But among comparatively modern writers this interpretation that σῶμα= church is also a strongly held view. Cullmann writes: "From the previous verse it is evident that this body is the Body of Christ, and from the whole context that this Body of Christ is the community, i.e. the Church". ⁶. White's view is the same:

"The idea that baptism brings the believer into the church, assumed in Ephesians v 25 as in 1 Corinthians i 13f, is explicitly affirmed in 1 Corinthians xii 13. Whether as the Body, or as the Bride, of Christ, the church receives all those who through baptism come to be "in Christ" (Gal. iii 27) - whether Jews, Greeks, slaves or free.

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1. Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, pp.219-220.
 2. Hodge, op. cit., p.254.
 3. Edwards, op. cit., p.325.
 4. See Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p.272.
 5. Ibid., p.270.
 6. Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p.30.

Baptism remains essentially a church rite." 1.

Finally, Flemington says: "The Christian community is a Body. When the Corinthians were baptized into Christ they became corporately members of that Body. That was what their baptism meant." 2.

However, that strong grouping in favour of interpreting $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ in a collective sense is matched well with some forceful arguments from those who regard this as a reference to Christ himself. "The Apostle never speaks of 'a body of Christians' but always of 'the Body of Christ'", says Robinson. And he continues: "For him, at any rate, the word clearly referred to the organism of a particular person". 3. Best thinks along similar lines:

"... 'Body' in this verse, though not in the whole passage, still retains the primitive sense of the members as members of Christ - without the development which introduces their mutual and harmonious relationships. Converts are not added by baptism to the society of Christians but are added to Christ; they are related to him." 4.

For Thrall the concept of the Body of Christ is like the Old Testament idea of solidarity as, for example, shown in the case of Achan and his family (Josh.7). 5.

1. White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, p.203.

2. Flemington, op. cit., p.56.

3. Robinson, The Body, fn., p.50.

4. Best, One Body in Christ, fn., p.97.

5. See Thrall, The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians, pp.89-90.

She comments on this verse: "We become members of the one body, part of Christ's inclusive personality, by baptism which signifies that from this point onwards we belong to Christ...".¹ Conzelmann has a preference for a 'local' sense to the words: "The expression appears to mean that the body is already there when believers are taken up into it by baptism; this is in harmony with the prevailing conception of space".² He also says:

"...here Paul speaks only of the unity which is brought about by the abrogation of the (physical and social) differences between believers. This idea is not derivable from the figure of an organism. For the latter is designed to emphasize the belonging together of different elements. Thus the disturbance in the sequence of thought³ is an indication in favor of the interpretation that the body of Christ is preexistent in relation to the "parts". Incorporation into it takes place through baptism." 4.

For this second group, then, there is a particular, prior identity to the 'body', and that identity is the person of Christ.

The fourth dividing point among commentators is a particularly radical one. It concerns what kind of baptism is being spoken of here - is it baptism in water, or, baptism in the Spirit (no water being involved at

1. Thrall, op. cit., p.90.

2. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, fn., p.212.

3. By Paul's mention in the verse of Jews/Greeks, slaves/free to which Conzelmann refers in a footnote.

4. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p.212.

all)? Hodge belongs to the group who interpret the verse to mean Spirit baptism:

"...in the present passage there does not seem to be even an allusion to water baptism, any more than in Acts 1,5. Paul does not say that we are made one body by baptism, but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; that is, by spiritual regeneration. Any communication of the Holy Spirit is called a baptism, because the Spirit is said to be poured out, and those upon whom he is poured out, whether in his regenerating, sanctifying, or inspiring influences, are said to be baptized. ...It is not therefore by baptism as an external rite, but by the communication of the Holy Spirit that we are made members of the body of Christ." 1.

Bruce is a paragon of brevity in stating his point:

"This is the one place in NT outside the Gospels and Acts where the baptism of the Spirit is mentioned". 2.

However, he also goes on to explain:

"The prediction of John that, while he baptized with water, the Coming One whose way he was preparing would baptize 'with the Holy Spirit' (Mk 1.8), is interpreted in Acts as fulfilled at Pentecost when Jesus, as the exalted Christ, 'poured out' the promised Spirit on his followers (Ac.2.33; cf. 1.5; 11.16), and thus inaugurated the church as the people of God of the new age. Paul expresses much the same thought here..." 3.

Dunn agrees that this is "the one passage in Paul which speaks explicitly of baptism in the Spirit...". 4. He does not think that this verse refers in any way to water-baptism: "If (βαπτίζειν) invariably signified immersion in water, even in its metaphorical usage, we

1. Hodge, op. cit., p.254.

2. Bruce, op. cit., p.120.

3. Ibid.

4. Dunn, op. cit., p.127.

would have contradiction in sense in Mark 10.38; Luke 12.50; Acts 1.5; 1 Cor.10.2 and here, and tautology in John 1.26,31. ...Paul is thinking of baptism in the Spirit; he is not speaking about water at all." ¹. He develops his argument by referring to the context of this verse, and, as Bruce did, to the background ideas of baptism in the Spirit:

"It is their experience of the Spirit (not of water-baptism) which provides the jumping-off point for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians for a right attitude towards the exercise of spiritual gifts. It is their experience of the one Spirit (not water-baptism) which is the basis of their unity. Paul must have been familiar with the idea of Spirit-baptism. The tradition is common to all four Gospels and prominent in the tradition of Pentecost. Rom.5.5 (ἐκκέχυται - the 'Pentecost word') and Titus 3.5-6 (ἐξέχεεν), if Pauline, strongly suggest that Paul was familiar with this tradition; 1 Cor. 6.11 (and probably 10.2) imply thought of baptism in the Spirit; and there are absolutely no grounds for denying that this is what he is talking about here." ².

He rounds off his case by one further point (which is of some importance to us later):

"The fact is that for Paul βαπτίζειν has only two meanings, one literal and the other metaphorical: it describes either the water-rite pure and simple (1 Cor.1.13-17) or the spiritual transformation which puts the believer 'in Christ', and which is the effect of receiving the gift of the Spirit (hence 'baptism in the Spirit'). The metaphor is drawn from the rite, just as it was in the Baptist's (and Luke's) talk of Spirit-baptism and in Jesus' talk of a baptism of death. But neither here nor there does the metaphor include the ritual act within itself." ³.

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.129.

2. Ibid., p.130.

3. Ibid.

To some extent it is hard to put the opposite case in this instance, for many commentators appear simply to assume that water-baptism is being spoken of.¹ Naturally they do not therefore argue for such an understanding. Nevertheless a few opinions can be found. But an opinion and not an argument is all that Ellicott offers: "It is almost self-evident that *ἡ βαπτίσθημεν* is to be taken in its usual and proper sense...",² and by that he means water-baptism. Barrett offers little more: "There is no reason to think that we were baptized refers to anything other than baptism in water (together with all that this outward rite signified)".³ His only explanation for this viewpoint is that the "death and resurrection of Christ are certainly implied and stand behind the rite...".⁴ Beasley-Murray, however, is prepared to argue at more length for a reference to water-baptism here. He puts forward four considerations. Firstly, on his understanding of 1 Cor.6:11,

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1. Perhaps because of the use of *βαπτίζω*. Of course, such a straight identification of *βαπτίζω* with water-baptism is precisely what Dunn has just criticised.
 2. Ellicott, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.237.
 3. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.289.
 4. Ibid. He sees baptism as signifying dying and rising with Christ, and therefore the Christian becomes in Christ a new creature. Such has happened to all baptized Christians, and because of that comes about the unity of which this verse speaks. Op. cit., p.288.

baptism is characterised by Paul as 'in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God', "a closely related conception to that in the present passage".¹ Secondly, he considers that this verse reflects the same conviction as that found in Acts where the primitive church sees the fulfilment of John's prediction of the messianic baptism 'in Spirit' first in the outpouring of Pentecost, and then in its administration of baptism to those responsive to the gospel. Thirdly, he points to a link in Gal.3:27ff. between what he calls baptism to Christ and baptism to the Church. (He particularly links vv.27 and 28.) This silent transition from Christ to the Body is paralleled in vv.12-13 here. His final consideration also refers to Galatians:

"The similarity between Gal.3.27f and 1 Cor.12.12-13 is reproduced in Paul's emphasis that baptism to Christ and his Church entails an obliteration of social distinctions. If in Gal.3 this happy result follows on Christian baptism and in 1 Cor.12.13 it follows on baptism in the Spirit, the inference is not unreasonable that the two baptisms are one." 2.

Thus Beasley-Murray is able to avoid a denial that baptism in the Spirit is intended here, yet to claim that baptism in water is meant, by identifying the two baptisms as happening in the one event.

The final issue which is debated among commentators concerns the last few words of the verse, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἑκοτίσθημεν. There is one sense in which

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.169.

2. Ibid.

this is the most complicated issue of all, for there is one debate concerning the intended reference of these words, and another regarding the specific meaning of *ἐποτίσθημεν*. The first of these, however, we shall not concern ourselves with as it is a debate about whether this is a reference to either communion or confirmation. Most commentators only refer negatively to such interpretations, but Schnackenburg gives fuller coverage.¹ We shall not deal with this issue for it is certainly not a matter of exegesis. To hold to either of these views requires some considerable degree of reading into the text of viewpoints arrived at from other sources. The other debate revolves around which sense is to be given to *ποτίσω* - to 'drink' or to 'water'. Depending on which is preferred, the verse concludes with either a statement concerning the reception of the Spirit, or one which speaks of the activity of the Spirit.

Ellicott favours the meaning 'drink', and so concludes that this is "repetition, in a slightly altered and more emphatic form, of the truth specified in the first member of the sentence".² Thus he finds "two similitudes being in fact latent in the verse, the one, the outpouring of the Spirit, in which, as in a bath, the recipient is immersed; the second...in which he

1. See Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*, p.84.

2. Ellicott, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.237.

drinks of the living water".¹ Morris takes this phrase to show that the Spirit is not thought of as external:

"All Christians have been made to drink one Spirit.

...The Spirit has entered their innermost being."²

Barrett similarly internalises the Spirit. He argues that although *ἰποτίσθημεν* was used of the watering of plants at 3:6, "there is no reason to suppose that Paul still has this metaphor in mind. The new figure is a necessary supplement to the statement that we were baptized (that is, immersed) in the Spirit; the Spirit not only surrounds us, but is within us."³ And White says: "The metaphor may be borrowed from outmoded usage, but Paul certainly means that a sufficient, even abundant, "supply" (Gal.iii 5, Phil.i 19) of the Spirit of Christ is vouchsafed to all who are baptised."⁴

Many of those who follow the other possible meaning of *ποτίσω* mention the occurrence in 3:6 (*Ἀπολλῶς ἰπότισεν*). Simon then takes the verb here in the sense of "irrigation, of watering".⁵ Robertson and Plummer give a triune rendering of "watered, saturated, imb-

1. Ellicott, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.238.

2. Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p.174.

3. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.289.

4. White, *op. cit.*, p.204.

5. W.G.H. Simon, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959), p.127.

ued", ^{1.} and Schnackenburg offers "deluged, drenched, permeated...". ^{2.} Lampe manages to extract a meaning which includes an internal function to the Spirit, yet speaks of the activity of the Spirit. Of this verse, he says:

"In language recalling the Old Testament metaphors in which the Spirit's action is likened to that of fresh water irrigating the stony desert, St. Paul combines the inward 'watering' of the Spirit with the outward washing of Baptism as the means whereby each believer, irrespective of his earthly status₃ and condition, is grafted into the one Body...". ^{3.}

Dunn argues at some length for a meaning of 'watered', although he accepts that Paul was familiar enough with a meaning of 'drink' for ποτίσω (3:2). He puts forward three main arguments for the other sense:

"(i) In biblical Greek the passive occurs only three times, and on the other two occasions the land is the subject (Gen.13.10; Ezek.32.6). (ii) ποτίσιν is used with πνεῦμα on only one other occasion in biblical Greek (Isa.29.10), and this is the only time that ποτίσιν is used to translate nāsak; but nāsak never has any other sense than 'to pour out'. (iii) In popular Greek ποτίσιν as a common agricultural term was its most frequent use (Moulton and Milligan). The use of an agricultural metaphor may seem crude to us, but it would not ring so harshly then. He has already used the same metaphor in 1 Cor.3.6-8, and he may draw in another agricultural metaphor in Rom.6.5, as he does in Rom.11.17ff." ^{4.}

From these arguments Dunn finds his conclusion easy:

1. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p.272.

2. Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.85.

3. G.W.H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951), p.56.

4. Dunn, op. cit., p.131.

"Evidently in v.13c Paul is taking up the OT images where the golden age to come is seen in terms of a land and a people on whom the Spirit has been poured (Isa.32.15; 44.3; Ezek.39.29; Joel 2.28). As in Gal.3.27 he switches from the metaphor of baptism to a second metaphor, almost as expressive in itself, and here even more expressive because of its OT associations. Conversion, for Paul and the Corinthians, was an experience of the Spirit which was like the outpouring of a sudden flood or rain-storm on a parched ground, and which made their lives like a well-watered garden (Jer.31.12). This imagery would be perfectly comprehensible to Paul's readers..."¹.

Among the various versions of the Bible in English, 'drink' is certainly the favoured translation (AV, RV, Knox, RSV, GNB). Phillips manages to make his paraphrase suitably vague ("we have all had experience of the same Spirit"), as does the Living Bible ("We...have all been given that same Holy Spirit"). The New English Bible is not vague - it simply puts both meanings in: "...that one Holy Spirit was poured out for all of us to drink"!

We have now looked at five issues surrounding this verse. In each case opinions have been sharply divided. As we move to the second stage of our treatment of this passage, it is clear that any line of interpretation must be put forward tentatively. In these matters we have seen how easy it is for commentators to come to opposite conclusions. Generally, opinion is equally divided, with good arguments being put forward from each point of view. One reasonable explanation for the existence of such a situation is that the verse is genuinely open to differing interpretations. On some issues Paul

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.131.

may have been happy with a degree of ambiguity since both options would be acceptable - for example, whether the baptism spoken of is 'by the agency of' or 'in the element of' the Spirit. (Both are Pauline ideas - cf. v.11 here, and Rom.8:9.) But it may be that clarity on other matters can come only with a proper appreciation of the status of the language, and then a correct application to that language of the appropriate rules. It may be that some of the divisions of interpretation we have found would not exist if that were done. Our particular task therefore, in this second stage of examining this passage, is to apply to it (where appropriate) some of the rules and procedures of metaphorical language. Where there is genuine Pauline ambiguity, it would be wrong, naturally, to force the meaning into one line of interpretation. But in other areas this approach may either provide an insight different to any of those already put forward, or may provide some solid foundation to one of the views which was presented. However, it should be said that with this passage certainty is a rare commodity.

In order to approach vv.12-13 in the correct way, we should like to know about two things. The first concerns the role of these verses within the general flow of Paul's thought in this chapter, and the second concerns the status of the language (e.g., literal or metaphorical) of these verses.

With the first of these, there is no difficulty in

understanding in general terms the point Paul is trying to put over to the Corinthians. In v.1 he announces that his topic is *Περὶ ... τῶν πνευματικῶν*, but it soon becomes clear that the particular purpose in dealing with spiritual gifts is to bring to an end all disputes over such matters. Paul wants to show that equality actually exists (as it were, from God's point of view), and that therefore these disputes have no basis. He argues for this in two stages. Stage one concentrates on the Spirit. In vv.1-3 he shows that anyone capable of confessing honestly the lordship of Jesus must do so by the Holy Spirit. Then in vv.4-11 Paul stresses that each manifests the Spirit (v.7), albeit in many different ways (vv.8-10). Yet such variety is a reflection solely of the will of the Spirit (v.11).

In this section (vv.4-11) Paul seems to have a picture in his mind of God (v.6) or the Spirit (v.11) as the generous benefactor (or perhaps 'ruler' or 'master' given the reference to *κύριος* in v.5), handing out various gifts. Not all receive the same gift - the benefactor never intended they should - but all do receive some gift, and are intended to use it for the common good. Since all the gifts do come from the same source, there is no place for complaint or envy. Paul, of course, does not spell this out as a picture (he may have been quite unconscious of it in such a way) but words like *χάρισμα* (v.4) and *δίδωμι* (vv.7f.) do imply it (or the alternative 'ruler' picture is implied by *διακονία* in

v.5 and possibly by ἐνέργημα in v.6).

Stage two concentrates on the body. In vv.14-26 Paul uses the illustration, or metaphor, of the body,¹ showing the interdependence of one part of the body on another. All parts are equally necessary and therefore no discord can exist in the body for there is mutual care. (This time there is no question about Paul's consciousness of using a picture.)

He concludes the chapter by drawing these two strands of argument, these two pictures, together. In v.27 he argues that they are σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. Whatever we eventually conclude the meaning of such terminology to be, the general force of the preceding 'body' illustration is intended to carry over here, and the Corinthians to realise that they, as the 'limbs' of the 'body', are dependent on each other and therefore any discord is quite inappropriate. And, with that as the background, in vv.28-30 Paul applies his stage one argument to their precise situation, showing that a variety of service is precisely what God wills.

What is important to realise is that these two

1. Many commentators point out that Paul may or may not have been familiar with the somewhat similar fable of the body as recounted, according to Livy, in 494 BC by Menenius Agrippa to the plebeians in Rome when they were discontented with their social status. Whatever its origins, the metaphor would fall into Caird's category of a "highly developed" metaphor, i.e., one which has been exploited and considerably used by a writer. See Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.154. Gale says of I Cor. 12:12-30: "The most extensive use of an analogy by Paul...", The Use of Analogy in the Letters of Paul, p.116.

stages are precisely that - stages. They are not two, alternative arguments which are both used to add emphasis. They could be. Each could stand on its own and be a good case for unity and harmony in the church at Corinth. But in fact the two arguments are dove-tailed so that the first runs into the second. One leads to the other, and the unity of argumentation thus adds to its impact. The point of unity - the 'dove-tail' - is in vv.12-13. Even a cursory glance at the chapter shows that only in these verses does 'Spirit' language and 'body' language mix. The word $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ does not appear in vv.1-11, and similarly $\kappa\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is absent from vv.14-26. Only in vv.12-13 does the terminology mingle. And the consecutive nature of the argument is clearly shown by the repeated use of $\gamma\alpha\rho$ as an introduction to vv.12, 13 and 14. At each point of the argument here Paul is building on what he has just said. This is important for the exegesis of vv.12-13, for it gives us guidance on what to look for from these verses. Paul is going to move his argument from the unity of the common activity of the Spirit among them to the unity which comes from common membership of the 'body'. Therefore, the meaning we take from these verses, if it is to be accurate, should also be capable of making that transition between the two stages of Paul's argument. ¹.

1. That is, unless Paul's logic at this point be considered either faulty or aimless, and neither of those criticisms is levelled against him.

What now of the logical level of the language in vv.12-13? We stated at the outset that problems in this area were involved in the disputes over these verses, and this has become obvious. Is *Χριστός* in v.12 a metaphor for 'church', or does it literally refer to Jesus? Which metaphor - agent or element - is in mind in v.13 in the phrase *ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι*? Is *σῶμα* a collective metaphor or a reference to the person of Christ? ¹. And which metaphor - one of drinking or one of watering - is intended in *ἐποτίσθημεν*? To some extent the other issue - water-baptism or Spirit-baptism - is a question of metaphor also. For some treat *εβαπτίσθημεν* as simply a straight, literal reference to water-baptism, while those who take it to mean Spirit-baptism usually consider they are using the verb as a metaphor arising out of water-baptism.

Precisely because the main issue in many of these matters concerns the status of the language, it is impossible to give a 'blanket' answer on this subject in advance. We can only know what type of language is being used by examining it. We can say that at least part of the verses is metaphorical. For example, the debate we

1. It is possible to take this matter even further and question whether the 'person of Christ' would be the 'historical Jesus' or the 'resurrected, heavenly Jesus'. And, after that, further issues could arise regarding what status was accorded to the language about either. There may well be answers to these questions but they lie beyond the scope of our study of these verses, although some comment is made later on how we may think of a 'baptism into a body'.

examined over the sense of *ἐποτίσθημεν* concerned which of two possible metaphors was being used. No matter which 'side' were considered to have the better case for their interpretation, the language would remain metaphorical. And, from our previous studies, we can predict also that somewhere in the phrase *πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν* there is a metaphor. Just as we noted in our study of 1:13 that people are not ordinarily baptized into a name, neither are they ordinarily baptized into a body. Something out of the ordinary - therefore something non-literal but metaphorical - is being said here. The only preliminary conclusion we can make, then, regarding the logical level of the language here is that at least some of it is metaphorical. So, as we now proceed through the text we must at all times keep this whole matter of the status of the language in mind. We must ask: Does this word or phrase say something straightforwardly, or is some picture being evoked by it? The decisions we make concerning the status of the language will more than anything else influence our interpretation here.

Paul tells us at the beginning of v.12 that he is going to give us an illustration, an analogy in fact, for he introduces the sentence with *Καθὰπερ γὰρ*. The analogy begins the bridging of the gulf between the two stages of argument in the chapter. For it mentions *τὸ σῶμα* (which belongs to stage two) but points out that it is *ἓν* (a central word, both implied and stated, in

stage one - cf. vv.4-6,11). A body has an obvious oneness about it despite the fact that it consists of many varied parts. But with what, now, does Paul draw the analogy? He writes: οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός.¹ He sees a sameness between the body and Christ.

We are faced with a double problem in understanding this. On the one hand the language here is straightforward in that there is no qualifier of Χριστός to reveal a metaphorical sense, no jostling of the language to suggest a more than literal meaning. Therefore it would seem that there is a straight reference here to Jesus. This would be using the word Χριστός on the same logical level as at, for example, 11:1 where Paul says he is an imitator of Christ. But on the other hand, if this is no more than a literal reference to Jesus, the analogy is a very strange one. Perhaps what is puzzling is that the analogy is so obvious. Yes, the body is one and has many members. Yes, Jesus is one person with many parts. That would hardly need saying. Therefore, it would seem likely that while Paul may indeed be referring to the person of Jesus he is leading up to a metaphor in the next verse, and is not here thinking of Jesus solely in a literal sense. This reference to

1. It could be argued that ὁ Χριστός is metaphorical in the sense of 'the anointed one'. However, for that to be even possibly the sense would require prior justification for taking ὁ Χριστός as a reference to Jesus rather than to the church - precisely the issue at stake.

'Christ' is an introductory statement to the metaphor. It is on a par with the similar reference we examined in 1:13, *μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός*; There we concluded that while the reference was to Jesus, the implied metaphor was one of Christians in union with Christ, Christians being 'in Christ'.¹ This seems to be Paul's meaning here too. The full blown metaphor of v.27 is not to be read in here. Paul has not yet said that. That is his conclusion, not his introduction. Nor is the metaphor of v.13 to be presumed. In v.12 Paul is only leading up to that. His beginning is to refer to a feature of the body and liken Christ to it. The status of the reference to *Χριστός*, then, is one of being partly literal and partly metaphorical. Literally it does refer to Jesus - there is nothing in the text which tells us it should not. But a submerged metaphor of Christians 'in Christ' is almost certainly there in Paul's mind (not yet in the text). Only by presuming that submerged metaphor does the analogy of v.12 make useful sense. The usefulness is its function as an introduction to v.13.

That this is the case is confirmed by the opening words of v.13, *καὶ γὰρ*. As already stated, the *γὰρ* shows the continuous nature of the argument, and the *καὶ*, which here probably carries the sense of 'indeed', confirms that what is about to be said follows on from

1. See above, pp.231ff.

the previous statement.¹ Paul is not going to mirror v.12. Rather he is going to explain it by expanding on it. But what words exist to 'explain' something not tangible, not examinable, not measurable? Paul wants to show that a particular relationship exists - between the Christians and Christ and so between fellow Christians - and the only way he can speak of it is to use a word picture, a metaphorical phrase.

The centre of the verse is πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν. As already said, one thing is clear, and that is that this is a metaphorical statement. The word σῶμα is a qualifier to the metaphor ἐβαπτίσθημεν. It pushes the meaning of what is thought about literally when speaking of baptism in a new direction and to a new level. It stimulates the verb into a new sense, a sense which goes beyond what would be considered a literal reference to baptism. This is baptism into a body. As such, a metaphor must be intended, and that is one of immersion, plunging.² The qualifier not only stimulates but guides the direction of thought. This metaphor of immersion refers to immersion into a body. The grids and lines on the metaphorical screen are being drawn in such a way that all we can see in this baptismal

1. Hodge and Beet both see v.13 as in some way "proof" of what is stated in v.12. See Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.253; Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, p.219.

2. A fact hesitantly mentioned by Schnackenburg, op. cit., p.26.

picture is the image of an immersion into a body, not any other possible significance of a baptism. Again, the use of the preposition εἰς confirms that a specific goal of baptism is being spoken of. The intended locus of the immersion is εἰς ἓν σῶμα.

Now the vital question comes. What body is being referred to here? Without needing to have recourse to v.27 we can readily answer that it is the body of Christ. (Though, of course, it serves to confirm this deduction that the conclusion ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ comes in v.27, after the illustration in vv.14-26.) The body referred to must be that spoken of in the words of v.12, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός. There is no other point to these words being present in v.12 if they do not form the basis of the reference to the body in v.13. Were σῶμα in v.13 used purely as a collective - a 'body of Christians' - then Paul need not have referred to Christ in v.12. He would have written: Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἓν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν... If Paul meant body solely as a collective term, then the v.12 reference to Christ is quite redundant, out of place. ¹.

1. This is recognised by Schweizer who says: "...the surprising conclusion of the comparison in v.12: 'so Christ,' makes sense only if it is self-evident that the one body of the community is no other than the body of Christ Himself. ...The body of Christ is the given fact and not just a product of fellowship." Schweizer, art. σῶμα, TDNT, VII, pp.1070-1.

Since it is present, the predominant image in this metaphor is that these Christians have been immersed into one particular body and that body is Christ's. Paul is speaking of an immersion into Christ. They have been joined to him, made one with him. But there is a secondary image which follows from this. Because they are all in that same body, one body (ἐν σῶμα), of Christ, therefore they belong to each other even though they serve that body in different ways. The v.12/v.13 analogy is between the co-existence and function of the members in a human body (person) and the co-existence and function of the members (Christians) in the body (person) of Christ. It is this secondary image which Paul develops and explains at length in vv.14-26. It is to this that he makes the transition we spoke of. (Therefore it is 'secondary' only in the sense of being derivative, and not in terms of its importance.¹) Paul's picture is that all belong to the one body - therefore all belong together.² The particular point of v.13, as distinct from v.27, is to state the way whereby that situation, that relationship came about for these Corinthians. In that connection the verb

1. Mersch feels the need to stress the relationship with Christ: "The unity of the members with Christ is still more intimate than their union among themselves, since the former is the cause of the latter". The Whole Christ, p.116.

2. Schweizer recognises this also: "The crucified and risen body of Christ was for Paul a present place where the community was set. ...It became a unity thereby..." Art. σῶμα, TDNT, VII, p.1071.

ἡ βαπτίσθημεν is still important, as are the references to the Spirit.

Dunn has asserted that for Paul βαπτίζω is either literal or metaphorical but cannot be both. Earlier in his book he makes a similar statement with respect to the whole New Testament: "In the NT βάπτισμα and βαπτίζειν are never concertina words; their meanings are always clear cut".¹ An opinion such as that is self-authenticating for the one who holds it. If we decide that a particular word must be either literal or metaphorical then we interpret accordingly, and arrive at one or other meaning. This single-membered interpretation then reinforces our original premise. However, it is of the nature of metaphorical language, as we have found several times, that it is capable of carrying different meanings and levels of meaning all at once. Because the issue has been raised specifically in this context we may deal with it one more time.

Consider the statement: 'The pot-holer wormed his way through the hole'. Is it metaphorical or literal? The verb 'wormed' is a metaphor drawn from an obvious source. Therefore we might say that this is not a literal statement but metaphorical (revealed by the fact that the activity of a worm is attributed to a pot-holer). Yet there is something of a literal meaning there too because the person in question did actually

1. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.6.

wriggle along on the ground.¹ Or, consider a possible statement by a clergyman: 'On such-and-such a date God ordained me to the ministry'. In the man's mind is a church ceremony with some religious dignitary carrying out the act of ordination. Yet, because of a sense of divine commission, he says: 'God ordained me'. Is this a literal or metaphorical statement? It is both. Since the ordaining is attributed to God and not the fellow clergyman who pronounced the words, a metaphor is being used. Yet the statement has a literal reference also to that day and that time when the candidate stood in a particular church for a particular ceremony. We could say that the word 'God' has functioned as a qualifier in this instance, pushing the significance of the word 'ordained' beyond simply a reference to the pronouncement of certain words. By speaking of 'God' ordaining, the sense in which 'ordained' is used is different from what it would have been had the sentence instead referred to a clergyman. This is similar to what we found happened to the statement 'Our Father' when 'in heaven' was added to it - suddenly words which could have been ordinary, literal language were pushed to a new metaphorical sense.² However, in our example here, the literal sense of ordained is not lost. A particular event is

1. In contrast would be the statement: 'He wormed his way into that job', where there is no literal sense to the words.

2. See above, pp.107f.

still in mind. What has happened is that 'ordained' has become a 'concertina word', referring to the actual event of ordination but also, by metaphor, giving a particular significance (perhaps of divine commission) to that event. If that can be true for this example, then it can be also for the noun *βάπτισμα* or the verb *βαπτίζω*. They, too, can be 'concertina words', embracing a metaphorical meaning and a literal reference in the one expression.

But is that what happens here? We must remember that several championed the view that this is a reference to 'baptism in the Spirit' with no thought of water being involved.

Certainty cannot be had, but it does seem likely that this does refer to baptism in water, with the metaphorical effect of immersing the baptisand into the body of Christ. The phrase *ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι* must be interpreted in line with stage one of Paul's argument in this chapter. That we said was an argument which was based on the agency of the one Spirit on all of them. We saw how vv.4-6 emphasised the common source of gifts in the Spirit of God (the references to the Spirit and God seem interchangeable in vv.4 and 6) and, from v.6 (n.b. the verb *ἐνεργῶν*) to v.11, the common activity of the Spirit upon them all is stressed, culminating in the statement *πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα*. This is the language of the work of the Spirit, the agency of the Spirit. When we shortly, then, read v.13,

the act of the one Spirit upon them all - placing them by baptism into the body of Christ - is Paul's intended sense. This is not the occasion where the Spirit is being spoken of as the element in which a baptism takes place. Rather the better sense, from what precedes, is to find Paul speaking of what he regarded as possibly one of the greatest acts of the Spirit, being the agent of the baptismal immersion into the body of Christ.

If now we paraphrase the Greek, allowing for the aorist tense, our meaning is: 'For each of us there was a moment when, by the power of the one Spirit, we were immersed/baptized into the body of Christ...'. Given the possibly multivalent sense of βαπτίζω in this sentence, it would seem that this refers to water-baptism. From this text alone it cannot be proved, but, having removed the possibility of Spirit-baptism (i.e., baptism in the element of the Spirit) and given a sense of agency to the Spirit, and taking account of the choice and tense of verb, it seems very probable that the picture evoked for the Corinthians would be one associated with the act of baptism.

We do not wish at this stage to compare baptismal text with baptismal text. Nevertheless, prior references to baptism in this letter could be of importance to precondition the Corinthians' understanding of the reference here.¹ In chapters 1 and 10 Paul has already

1. We should recall Black's view that in a sustained
(Contd.)

used the verb βαπτίζω in a context where, directly or indirectly, the meaning of that baptism was a union with Christ. When he now uses the verb here in ch.12 there is less need for Paul to paint in all the details of the picture. A few brushstrokes give sufficient guidance for the Corinthians to understand that substantially the same image is being evoked. In this case the brushstrokes consist of an expression of immersion into the body.

Again, it is only an interpretation of v.13 as referring to baptism in water that makes sense of the second reference in the verse to the Spirit, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἰποτίσθημεν. Because of the aorist tense, we know that this refers to a once-in-the-past experience of the Spirit, the precise nature of that experience being contained in whichever meaning of the metaphor ποτίζω is preferred. But if the first part of the verse is taken to be a once-in-the-past experience of baptism of the Spirit, then it requires linguistic and theological gymnastics to avoid having basically the same thing said twice in the one verse. It makes much better sense to understand the first reference as being the activity of the Spirit to place the baptized believer into the body of Christ. To this believer comes also

Contd.)

piece of poetry or prose a writer can "establish a novel pattern of implications". (See above, p.103.) This may well be happening here.

(quite possibly at that same moment) the experience referred to at the end of the verse.

Which metaphor - to 'drink' or to 'water' - is intended by Paul does not greatly affect the purpose of Paul in writing it. For him what was important was that πάντες shared in ἑν Spirit. Both metaphors are possible with the weight of argument tipping the interpretation in favour of a watering metaphor.

Our conclusion, then, is that in this v.13 Paul seems to be speaking of baptism both literally and metaphorically. The picture evoked is that of placing the baptized believer into the body of Christ. This is done by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that experience may well be also one whereby the baptisand is drenched in the Spirit.

There is a certain crudity to this picture of being placed into a body, if some kind of real sense is to be given to 'body' in terms of the person of Christ. Such crudity has always been implicit in the phrases 'in Christ' or 'into Christ', but here it is embarrassingly explicit.¹ One point to make, and one which reinforces this interpretation of Paul's meaning, is that a crude image is needed by Paul to link in to stage two of his argument. In other words, an image of being placed into

1. Robinson is conscious of the "crudity" and "materialism" of Paul's language. To illustrate it he paraphrases v.27: "You are the body of Christ and severally membranes thereof". Robinson, The Body, p.51.

a body does enable the transition in Paul's argument, which we spoke of earlier, to take place. (The picture does 'work', and that, as we said, has a certain importance.) He is going to continue from v.14 to make a comparison between the relationship of members of a body to that body and to each other, and the Corinthians' relationship to Christ and to each other. To do so he says they are in the body of Christ. What vv.12-13 have done is to take the central theme of the preceding verses, the common activity of the Spirit upon them, and said that in their baptism the common activity of the Spirit upon them was to immerse them into the one body (which we took to mean Christ, v.12). He speaks of *ἐν σώμα* in order to lead into stage two of his argument. Paul has dove-tailed the work of the Spirit and the relationships 'in' the body in these verses. Although the end product of that dove-tail, the picture of an immersion into a body by the Spirit, is crude, it does give a basis for the comparison which follows. Ruef argues that in this passage which speaks of the one Body and the Body of Christ, Paul is not forging a doctrine of the church. "He is rather using these terms to elucidate the situation of the Corinthian Christians. The Body-image is therefore a means to an end."¹ To speak of being baptized into the body is therefore for Paul a pedagogically useful metaphor.

1. Ruef, Paul's First Letter to Corinth, p.130.

But how are we to understand this today? Can we make some adequate sense of a crude image such as this? Once again it must be said that we cannot treat this material as if it were literal language. For example, it would be quite inappropriate to enquire from Paul how much space is still available inside the body of Christ, or how many Christians can be incorporated before it is full up. Such measurements do not belong to the logical level of this language.¹ Does this mean, however, that because this type of question may not be asked of this language, no precision at all is forthcoming from metaphors? No, it does not mean that. Macquarrie helps us toward an answer by questioning the relationship thought to exist between a model or metaphor and that which it represents. Summarising to some extent the work of Black and Ramsey, Macquarrie shows how a relation of 'likeness' may well not exist between the two. In the 19th century, scientific models were supposed to be 'picture' models, reproducing or copying on a different scale selected features of something. He mentions the representation of the atom as a miniature solar system as an example of a 'picture' model. But such models are not used today. Science accepts that the atom cannot be pictured at all, and although scientists

1. Even Barrett's worry of confusion of identity between Christ and believers in the body (see above, pp. 280-1), only arises out of a failure to appreciate that such questions or issues are inappropriate on the logical level of the metaphorical language here.

may speak of 'particles', 'waves' and the like, such language is not to be taken literally. He goes on:

"We cannot understand the atom in the way the nineteenth century physicist wanted to understand it, that is to say, by constructing a mental model that would reproduce the essential features of the atom. Yet, on the other hand, it is clear that people today do in fact understand the atom better than people did in the nineteenth century. The models that are used today - Ramsey calls them 'disclosure' models - are not pictures based on one-to-one likeness between features of the picture and corresponding features in the original, yet the fact that they enable us to operate with the atom and to harness atomic power shows that somehow they stand in real relatedness to the nature of the atom." 1.

He concludes that they are "words that stand for something that is in itself quite incomprehensible, and yet words that somehow give us some way of coming to terms with the mystery". 2. These models or metaphors amount to a way of speaking about a subject. No claim is necessarily made of any direct correspondence between the subject and the manner of speaking, yet through that model a helpful insight into the subject is given.

This is one way in which the crudity of an image such as immersion into the body of Christ can be accepted today. Such models need not 'picture' in the sense of represent. They are a way of speaking by which the sympathetic listener - the one alive to such an image - can grasp something of the relationship being spoken of here in baptism. As long as the logical level of the

1. Macquarrie, God-Talk, p.199.

2. Ibid.

language is appreciated, then at least any difficulties of comprehension which arise are not caused by expecting something inappropriate from it or reading in something inappropriate to it.

In conclusion it is only fair to ask to what extent the rules of metaphorical language have helped us to an understanding of this verse. What difference has it made to approach these difficult verses conscious in this way of the possibilities and limitations of the language?

In v.12 our knowledge of the principles of metaphorical language allowed us to accord ὁ Χριστός a partly metaphorical and partly literal status without any thought of inconsistency in so doing. Because of our awareness of the elasticity of language when used in pictures (and we noted that these verses constituted a transit point between two sets of pictures), we were able to justify a neutral position between those who took the reference to Christ to be solely a literal reference to Jesus, and those who took it as completely metaphorical and equivalent to 'church'. Χριστός, then, we found to refer to Jesus, but already likely being used in an 'inclusive' sense to refer to Jesus and believers, thus serving to introduce the thought of v.13. In that verse we noted the highly metaphorical statement πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, and were able to recognise the structure of the metaphor, how σῶμα 'pushed' the meaning of ἐβαπτίσθημεν beyond what could

be considered a literal reference to baptism. It also 'qualified' the verb into the correct direction - the goal of such an 'immersion' was εἰς ἓν σῶμα, that body being of Christ. (We had previously noted that the analogy of v.12 was between a body and Christ, not between a body and a group of Christians. The reference to σῶμα in v.13, then, had to be read in the light of that. The 'immersion into one body' was an immersion into Jesus.) Then the rules of metaphorical language enabled us to see that ἑβαπτίσθημεν could be metaphorical but also literally refer to the act of being baptized. We could justify 'extralocution' in meaning and avoid being forced (as others were) to either just a reference to water-baptism, or just a metaphorical baptism. This was especially helpful because it did not seem possible to take this as a reference to 'baptism in the Spirit', for the general flow of the passage was to see the Spirit as an agent, thus the ἓν here being instrumental rather than locative. (The occurrence later in the verse of another reference to the Spirit, and that to a 'watering' or 'drinking' of the Spirit, also made it unlikely that anything other than an instrumental sense was intended at the beginning of the verse.) Additionally, we noticed how meanings could be evoked from a 'picture' on the basis of clues already given, and found that since this was not the first reference in this letter to βαπτίζω, and to a particular understanding of baptism in terms of oneness with Christ,

there was reason therefore to take this reference in a similar way. Finally, we were able to discern why Paul should choose to speak this time of immersion into a 'body', noting how it related to the rest of the chapter (the second stage of his argument), and conclude by giving a status to this kind of crude picture which would be acceptable in other disciplines today. We saw there was no need to take this metaphor of immersion into a body as a 'picturing model', reproducing actual elements of a state of affairs, but as a useful way of speaking - a 'disclosure model' which yielded useful insights, in this instance into the relationship between Christ and believer in baptism.

We have found Paul speaking here of baptism in metaphorical terms as union with the body which is Christ. This leads him to go on to say that because of their oneness to Jesus, the Corinthians also belong to each other in as close a way as do the different parts of a body.

This conclusion regarding the significance of baptism in 1 Cor.12 has been said before in varying ways. What we have sought to do here is provide some justification for such an interpretation. By employing the principles and rules of metaphorical language it can be seen that this way of understanding the reference has a sound foundation.

CHAPTER X

I CORINTHIANS 15:29

This reference to baptism in itself does not hold much profit for our study. We do not wish to join the ranks of speculators, each of whom offers his own theory regarding the meaning contained in these words. Conzelmann quotes a figure of 200 different explanations of this verse, ^{1.} and several commentators usefully summarise the more important of these theories. ^{2.} But theories are all they are. For this reference to baptism on behalf of the dead is unique in Paul's writings - he does not write in these terms at any other place. We cannot, then, get direct guidance about the meaning from other references. Therefore, unless there was general agreement regarding the meaning of the words in this verse, which clearly there is not, the matter spoken of will remain obscure. However, for many of the speculators, the answer is to insert a meaning.

This applies to any theory that this is a reference to a metaphorical baptism. One example would be the view that the baptisms spoken of were the blood-baptisms

1. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, fn., p.276. He also comments: "This is one of the most hotly disputed passages in the epistle". Op cit., p.275.

2. e.g., White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, pp.358ff.; Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, pp.185ff.; Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, pp.421ff.; Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, II, pp.386ff.

of the martyrs, an interpretation based on Mk.10:38 and Lk.12:50. Godet, one who follows this interpretation, cites these references, and continues:

"One can easily understand how, under the influence of such sayings, there was formed in the primitive Church a new expression such as that used here by the apostle, to denote the bloody death of martyrdom. The words: "for the dead," would thus signify: to be baptized, not as the believer is with the baptism of water to enter into the Church of the living, but to enter into that of the dead, the word dead being chosen in contrast to the Church on the earth and to bring out the heroism of that martyr-baptism which leads to life only through communion with the dead. Thereby the article *οἱ* before *βαπτίζομενοι* is fully explained; such baptized ones certainly form a class of Christians by themselves. The future also, *κοιήσουσιν*, is accounted for: "If there is no resurrection, what will be gained by such baptized ones, by their joining the ranks of the dead for the love of Christ and of the Church in heaven?" Finally, we shall see how natural, on this explanation, is the transition to the question of ver.30: "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour?" 1.

To take any such interpretation really seriously is not possible, for too much has had to be imported into the text. Yet it is obviously feasible to make such imported material fit the text, and then claim a metaphorical interpretation of Paul's words here. 2.

But such interpretations as these do not concern

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1. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, II, pp.389-90.
 2. Others, however, would certainly argue that there is no warrant at all for even thinking that a 'baptism of blood' concept lay behind this text, e.g., Grosheide puts forward two objections: "a) the church at Corinth enjoyed rest, there is no reference to persecution; b) we have no knowledge whether the idea of a baptism by blood, as it is derived from Mk.10:38f. and Lk.12:50 existed already in so ancient a time". Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.373.

us, simply because they are being read into the text. Our purpose has been to examine the metaphorical language before us in any passage, not to impose a metaphorical interpretation on Paul's words. Here Paul's language is both grammatically and logically straightforward. There is no impropriety of language to make us suspect that a metaphor is being used. Of course, his language is far from being theologically straightforward, and that is where most commentators have problems.¹ There may or may not be deductions to be drawn from this verse regarding the meaning of baptism, especially how the Corinthians regarded its significance. But such deductions do not arise from metaphors used about baptism here, and therefore they are not appropriate to our study.

There is one line of investigation worth doing, however. That is to look for a background super-model which has a bearing upon the reference to baptism. We have seen before, as in our study of Col.2:12, how such a super-model could considerably affect the interpretation of a passage. Here there is reason to think that a particular super-model, traces of which can be found

1. Beasley-Murray rightly says there are two real issues among scholars: (i) whether or not vicarious baptism is meant; (ii) among the majority today who accept that vicarious baptism is referred to, how that is to be understood within the wider framework of Paul's theology, e.g., did he approve of it, or is he only referring to it as an ad hominem argument? See Beasley-Murray, op. cit., pp.187ff.

in the chapter, lies behind the idea of baptism for the dead.

This becomes clear if, to begin with, we accept that Paul's words *ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν* carry some form of vicarious meaning, that is, that in some way it was considered that the baptism of a living person affected a dead person. Beasley-Murray says: "...all the evidence is against interpreting *ὑπὲρ* in v.29 in another than normal fashion; *ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν* must be rendered, 'in the interests of the dead', hence baptism for them must be primarily for the purpose of affecting their status and condition".¹ Paul appears to be speaking of a baptism that was considered actually to change the

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1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.187. Barrett says this is the sense "most naturally suggested by the words used". Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.364. Conzelmann agrees that such an interpretation is the one best in accord with the wording. See Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, p.275. Goudge considers vicarious baptism makes "excellent sense" of the passage. Goudge, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.149. Grosheide says: "The objection that the apostle could not have meant anything like a baptism for the benefit of others is exegetically out of place". Op. cit., p.372. It is interesting to note some of the various renderings of *ὑπὲρ* in English translations and paraphrases. The AV and RV put little content into it, using the preposition 'for'. Some others are not prepared to be any bolder in translation, both Weymouth and Knox keeping to 'for'. The RSV certainly goes further with the phrase 'on behalf of', and this is done also by the NEB. The Good News Bible reverts to 'for' but perhaps puts some extra connotation into *τί ποιήσουσιν* by rendering it: 'What do they hope to accomplish?'. Phillips courageously says: "...what is the point of some of you being baptised for the dead by proxy?'. The more recent paraphrase, The Living Bible, lacks such courage and reverts to 'for'.

situation of the dead. The most obvious question is, then: 'From what, to what?'. Thankfully, the answer is equally obvious: 'From being dead, to being alive' which is only another way of saying: 'From staying dead, to sharing in the resurrection'. For this is a chapter on resurrection, and, as the second half of v.29 shows clearly, the whole point of Paul mentioning this baptism on behalf of the dead was that it was nonsense if the dead were not raised. Put more positively, such a baptism on behalf of the dead was viewed as affecting the status or situation of the dead in such a way as to lead to resurrection.

Now, is there any super-model in the text that refers to resurrection and could therefore constitute the 'backdrop' to this reference to baptism? ¹. There is,

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1. It should be said that we are speaking only of a super-model regarding resurrection which has an influence on v.29. It is possible to see in this chapter a larger super-model which would, along with many other things, encompass the language of resurrection. That super-model could be called 'the victory of God'. This comes through in several places in the chapter: God's role in raising Christ (v.15 specifically, but implied throughout); the picture of Christ handing over to God the kingdom after every battle has been won (v.24); the supremacy of God (v.28); the power of God (v.38, cf., v.43); the goal of the kingdom of God (v.50); final victory given by God (v.57). In many ways the picture is of God as King over his kingdom, sending out and empowering Christ to do battle for him, to subdue the enemy and bring a people back to share in the King's victory. It is in terms such as these that Barrett interprets v.28: "The Son has been entrusted with a mission on behalf of his Father, whose sovereignty has been challenged, and at least to some extent usurped by rebellious powers. It is for him to reclaim this sovereignty by overcoming the powers,"
(Contd.)

and it is contained in the preceding arguments in this chapter for the resurrection of believers. The first argument is located principally in vv.12-16. There Paul states that to believe the dead are not raised is contrary to what has been preached about Christ. Their preaching, using the 'appearances' mentioned in vv.5-8, was that Christ was raised. But if it is a general maxim that the dead are not raised, then Christ cannot have been. If there is no resurrection generally, there cannot have been resurrection for Christ specifically. And that would leave Paul and his fellow preachers guilty of deceiving the people and misrepresenting God. Paul develops his arguments further in vv.17-19 by highlighting the consequences for believers if Christ has not been raised. For those alive now their faith is futile - they are still in their sins. Then he says (v.18): ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπώλοντο . The substance of that statement is that if Christ has stayed dead (no resurrection), then those ἐν Χριστῷ have also stayed dead (no resurrection). If there was no resurr-

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overthrowing his enemies, and recovering the submission of creation as a whole. This mission he will in due course execute, death being the last adversary to hold out, and when it is completed he will hand the government of the universe back to his Father." Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.360. Certainly a super-model along these lines ought to be borne in mind in order to interpret the chapter rightly. However, our search for a super-model is only with respect to the resurrection of believers in order to understand how such a statement as that of v.29 can be made. Therefore the super-model we shall find will be appropriately narrower in its applicability.

ection for Christ then there is none for believers either.

This concept he now goes on to explain, his argument beginning to take a more positive direction. In v.20 Paul makes two statements: first, that Christ has in fact been raised, and, second, that (because of this) he is ἀπαρχὴ of those who are dead. The idea of the 'first fruit' is derived from the Old Testament sacrificial offering system and is based on such passages as Deut.26:1-11.¹ There is no need for us to study the significance of such an offering,² for Paul takes only one general factor from it, that the first fruit was taken from a much larger crop to follow. This is particularly clear in v.23 (an introductory verse to a brief 'timetable' section, vv.23-28): "Ἐκαστος δὲ ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι· ἀπαρχὴ Χριστός, ἔπειτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

1. Other relevant passages are Ex.22:29; 23:19; (25:2-3 in LXX) 34:26; Lev.2:12,14; 23:10-11.

2. Especially since to do so might lead us into all manner of complications. For example, Thompson writes on the offering of 'firstlings' and 'first-fruits': "Their purpose was probably not to consecrate the rest of the crop, but to deconsecrate it. All was God's until the first portion had been offered and accepted in lieu of the whole. Only then was the restriction on the human use of the remainder removed (Lv.xxiii.14, cf. xix.23-25)." R.J. Thompson, art. 'Sacrifice and Offering', New Bible Dictionary, ed., J.D. Douglas (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962), p.1117. Were Paul's use here seen to be parallel to this facet of the OT offering the implications for Pauline theology could be complex!

What is of most interest for us is the nature of the relationship, spoken of in vv.21-22, between Christ as first fruit and the believers who are to follow. This is 'in Christ' language again, using ideas of solidarity, with Adam and Christ as the forerunners and founders of death and resurrection respectively. (There are obvious links between this passage and Rom.5:12ff.) Paul's argument follows a by now familiar pattern - because Christ has been raised, those linked to Christ will also be raised. ¹. In v.21 he cites Adam as the one through whom death came, and Christ as the one through whom has come resurrection. He begins v.22 with *ὥστε γὰρ* which shows that he is about to justify that statement. ². The explanation is the statement of two unions - one with Adam leading to death, and the other with Christ leading to life. Goudge says of v.22:

1. Commentators discuss whether or not a universal resurrection of all men is intended by v.22, but nearly all conclude that the change of preposition from *διὰ* in v.21 to *ἐν* in v.22 makes it clear that it is only those who are 'in Christ' who will be made alive, e.g., Godet: "It is not without intention that Paul in this verse substitutes the preposition *ἐν*, in, for the *διὰ*, by, of the preceding verse. The relation expressed by *διὰ* was more external; it was that of causality. The relation expressed by *ἐν* is more intimate; it is that of moral solidarity, community of life." Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, II, p.352. Edwards further notes that *ἐν* carries a distinctive meaning here from *διὰ*, else this verse would almost be a repetition of v.21. See Edwards, op. cit., p.412.

2. Grosheide comments: "As vs.21 furnished the reason for vs.20, so does vs.22 for vs.21". Op. cit., p.363.

"An explanation of the previous verse. Christians die, not merely "through," but "in" Adam. He, as it were, included all humanity in himself; we die, because we inherit his fallen nature. So also we shall rise, not merely "through" but "in" Christ. He includes all His members; we shall rise, because we share His life, as really as we share that of Adam." 1.

Those 'in Christ' rise because he rose. What is true of him will be true of the believer joined to him.

Robertson and Plummer say that the idea of first fruit "implies community of nature. The first sheaf offered in the Temple on the morrow of the Passover was the same in kind as the rest of the harvest..." 2. Schnackenburg, speaking of Paul's chain of proof from v.20, says:

"Christ has in fact risen, and that as the first-born of those who have fallen asleep. Paul deduces theologically the resurrection of believers from the Adam-Christ parallels: Christ is the Head of a new humanity that belongs to Him, the Founder of a new race, and what happened to Him will happen to all." 3.

Beet heads his section on vv.12-34: "Since Christ has risen, his people will rise". 4.

The main feature in this chapter, then, of the relationship of believer to Christ concerning resurrection is that resurrection is for those 'in Christ'. To put it in other words, we could say that when Paul

1. Goudge, op. cit., p.146.

2. Robertson and Plummer, First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, p.351.

3. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.96.

4. Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, p.269.

speaks of resurrection in this chapter he does so under the 'umbrella' of a super-model expressed in the phrase 'in Christ'. The picture is of a solidarity, a unity, a oneness, between Christ and the believer. Therefore, since Christ has been raised, resurrection must happen some day to the Christian also.¹ Thus we find this super-model controlling, in the context, Paul's thought of resurrection.

At v.29 Paul reverts to the kind of 'if' statements which he used almost consistently between vv.12 and 19, statements referring to the consequences if Christ has not been raised. The introductory word 'Ἐπεὶ' draws the attention back to where these statements finished in v.19, and introduces yet another point for them to consider if Christ has not been raised.² That is their

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1. It could be considered pertinent to ask whether it is this solidarity which leads to the believer's resurrection, or his faith in what God has done for Christ. In answer, the references in vv.2 and 11 to what the Corinthians have 'believed' could be pointed to, in order to show that faith is taken to lie behind this whole matter of the believer's resurrection. Indeed, we could hardly think that Paul would imagine that solidarity with Christ could come about without faith. But, it is even more relevant to say that Paul is particularly concerned here to associate the Christian in what has happened to Jesus. No matter how much they believed (if they did) that God raised Jesus, that in itself would not demonstrate that he intended raising them. But if Paul can show them that they are 'in Christ', then what was true for him should be true for them also. 'Faith' and 'solidarity' are not in rivalry. Rather it is that the latter is more to the fore at this point for that better suits Paul's purpose.
 2. Grosheide says that in v.29 'Ἐπεὶ' means: 'if, as we assumed above for just a moment, there were no resurrection of the body'. Op. cit., p.371.

attempt by baptism to achieve resurrection for their dead. But as we come to this verse again, we now know also of a super-model which tells us that resurrection comes about by a union with Christ. Given these two things, an attempt by baptism to bring about resurrection for the dead, and a controlling model which says that resurrection comes about by a oneness with Christ, it follows that the view being held here of baptism is that it effects such a oneness with Christ. If due weight is allowed to the super-model operative here, and if baptism is being considered as an act which brought about a change of some sort, then baptism must be considered here as the place, the occasion, or the cause of uniting the one on whose behalf the baptism is taking place with Christ. Baptism has the effect of making the person *ἐν Χριστῷ*.

The merit of regarding the reference in this way is that it not only makes sense of v.29 but of its location in the rest of the chapter. It 'fits' the logic of the passage. Whether that 'sense' is one which commentators like today is largely beside the point. Should this be an ad hominem argument, then whether or not Paul liked it is also largely beside the point. What is true is that, given a view of baptism as 'oneness with Christ', such as that which seems to be held by Paul, then it is quite possible that some Corinthians would adopt a practice of baptism for the dead. If baptism was seen as leading to an immersion into Jesus, and to

be ἐν Χριστῷ was necessary for resurrection, then to baptize to effect such a union on behalf of the deceased would have a certain logic to it. The deduction that it is a good idea to baptize on behalf of the dead can be construed from Paul's own theology. But that in itself need not mean Paul approved of it, for unwarranted deductions could be made from his theology as well as those which were justified (see Rom.6:1).

It is wise to retain a certain agnosticism with regard to this reference to baptism.¹ As White concludes: "1 Cor.xv 29 remains in fact a tantalising problem".² What we have sought to show is not that there is any metaphor of baptism here to explain it, but that a logical explanation of baptism for the dead can follow from the recognition of the presence of a super-model, connected with resurrection, of oneness, union, with Christ.

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1. One reason for such tentativeness is that it is recognised that the interpretation given above depends upon a prior acceptance that this text refers to vicarious baptism. And to that many would take strong exception.
 2. White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, p.361.

CHAPTER XI

ACTS

As we studied Paul's references to baptism it was obvious that they were neither numerous nor lengthy. Indeed, we saw how in each instance baptism was mentioned only in order to illustrate or prove some argument in which Paul was engaged in his letter. Despite the 'accidental' nature, therefore, of Paul's baptismal references, we were able to identify seven and discuss them, examining the pattern of metaphorical language in each. None of these texts was lengthy, but, because there were seven all attributed to the one writer, we shall be able to discuss later whether or not any distinctive metaphorical pattern has emerged through them, whether the same basic metaphor is being repeated, or whether Paul works with several different models concerning baptism.

Before coming to such a task, however, it is useful to be aware whether any alternatives exist to the metaphors referring to baptism which we have found in Paul. Only in one place in the New Testament is there any frequency of references to baptism at all comparable to what we have found in Paul, and that is in the Acts.

Baptism in Acts is a far from simple subject for many, for they find real problems in knowing how to handle the historicity question. Is Luke ¹. writing

1. We use the name 'Luke' as the generally accepted
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an account of the actual events and sayings of the time of the earliest church? Or is he painting an idealised picture of the purpose of that early church? Or is he to some extent laying foundations in speeches and events for the practices of the church of his day? Indeed, many wonder whether Luke would have understood the differences, in the way we do, between these questions. Given this situation, some have questioned the primitiveness of baptism in water, suggesting that perhaps a baptism in the Spirit was all that was originally necessary, and that the references to water are secondary additions. Others are quick to advocate Luke's reliability as a historical reporter, at least in terms of such basic matters as whether or not water-baptism was practised in the church's earliest years.¹ Some are prepared to accept that there was a considerable time-span between the occurrence of the first events of the church and Luke's recording them, but would still wish to hold to the view that there is a reasonable measure of historical accuracy in the work. Flemington, for example, says of baptism in Acts: "...though no doubt the book was written well on in the century, nevertheless it does record with a considerable degree of faithfulness many

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name for the author of Acts, yet recognise that such authorship questions are always matters of debate.

1. Beasley-Murray usefully summarises the various viewpoints. Op. cit., pp.93ff.

of the beliefs and practices of pre-Pauline Christianity".¹

Thankfully we are able to sidestep such issues here. We are not seeking to find answers to critical questions of this type. What we desire is to find a portrayal of baptism which we may use to set alongside that given by Paul in order that generalised comparisons and contrasts may be made. Should that portrayal be that of the primitive church of the AD 30s and 40s, then that is perfectly good for our purposes. Should that portrayal be that of Luke and the church of the AD 80s or 90s (or even later), then that is equally good for our purposes. We shall still have a representation of baptism which we can use.

However, let us be clear that our look at Acts is for illustrative purposes only, to make a comparison with Paul. We are not looking to Acts for answers to questions of baptismal practice,² nor are we seeking to give a full exposition of baptismal theology in Acts. Our study of any one passage in Acts will be quite brief, only intended to highlight the main features. We shall not discuss the central issues in detail, far

1. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p.37.

2. In this connection White issues a useful warning: "It is relevant to recall...that Luke is writing neither a history of liturgy nor an analysis of primitive theology, but a portrait, for special apologetic purposes, of a living church". Op. cit., p.193.

less secondary matters. If we can identify the general thrust of the portrayal of baptism in Acts, then that will be quite sufficient for our purposes.

Our procedure will be to look at each of the accounts in Acts of baptism in water. After that we shall draw together some of the features we have uncovered.

Acts 2:38

The relevant aspects of baptism here surround the verb βαπτισθήτω. There is one pre-condition of baptism, μετανοήσατε, and two results, ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν... λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. Thus Williams says: "Repentance, Baptism, the forgiveness of sins and receipt of the Holy Spirit are linked together...", ¹ and Blaiklock writes: "Repentance demands the witness of baptism; forgiveness is followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit". ² Rackham speaks in similar vein, concerning this verse, of conditions for the reception of the gospel: "They are (1) repent; and (2) be baptized. So will be obtained (a) forgiveness of sins, and (b) the gift of the Spirit." ³

These characteristics - repentance, baptism, for-

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1. C.S.C. Williams, A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957), p.70.
 2. E.M. Blaiklock, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Inter Varsity Press, 1959), p.60.
 3. R.B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1901), p.30.

givenness, Holy Spirit - have a familiar ring about them. The parallel is with the accounts of the preaching and activity of John the Baptist, especially as given in Luke's gospel. In one sense that is not surprising, if Luke and Acts have a common authorship. But in another sense it is of great interest that Luke should portray so much in common between John's baptism and early Christian baptism. The parallelism between Luke and Acts is clear. The τί ποιήσωμεν ...; of v.37 is precisely the question of different groups to John in Lk. 3:10, 12 and 14. Peter's command in v.38, μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν... εἰς ἁφέσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν is remarkably like the summary of John's preaching in Lk.3:3, βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἁφέσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. Even Peter's promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised also by John in Lk.3:16. Despite these similarities the difference between the two passages, and baptisms, is quite obvious. John preached repentance and a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Peter preached repentance and a baptism ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ for the forgiveness of sins.

Therefore the baptism spoken of in this verse is one which sounds very like John's baptism but done 'upon the name of Jesus Christ'. Several commentators speak of this link with John's baptism. R.R. Williams says: "Just as John the Baptist had provided a physical washing as a 'prophetic sign' of the change of heart for which he pleaded, so Peter calls on his hearers to BE BAPT-

IZED". ¹. Flemington comments that probably in Acts 2 "...Peter and the other Apostles were consciously carrying on and adapting the practice of John the Baptist... but they went on to define this new baptism as "in the name of Jesus Christ", thus indicating more precisely than had been possible for John the Baptist the character of the fresh allegiance". ². Bruce writes: "The main difference between John's baptism...and that on the day of Pentecost was that the latter was associated with the name of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit". ³. C.S.C. Williams offers one possible explanation for the basic parallelism between this Christian baptism and John's baptism: "Some apostles may have been John's disciples originally, and all may well have adapted his water-baptism to Christian use in the 'name of Jesus'...". ⁴. What all these comments point to is the simple fact highlighted by Lampe: "The novel element in the command is not baptism as such, but the fact that it is to be undertaken 'in the name of Jesus Messiah'...". ⁵. The

1. R.R. Williams, The Acts of the Apostles (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1953), p.48.

2. Flemington, op. cit., p.45.

3. F.F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles (London: The Tyndale Press, 1951), p.97.

4. C.S.C. Williams, op. cit., p.70. The whole issue of the continuing influence of John's disciples is problematical, and, for wider studies of baptism, is a particularly pertinent issue in connection with the 'disciples' of ch.19.

5. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit, p.19. His rendering
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meaning of ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is bound to be of significance for an understanding of baptism here.

Unfortunately, deciding upon that meaning is particularly difficult. The phrase has the preposition ἐπί which has a basic meaning of 'on' or 'upon'.¹ However, to know that does not take us very much further in understanding this phrase within its context. We are still left wondering what is the meaning of baptism 'on' or 'upon' the name of Jesus Christ. And a study of the use of the 'name formula' in Acts leaves us little wiser either. There it is more frequently used, and used in more ways, than anywhere else in the New Testament. In

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of Χριστός as "Messiah" is interesting, and may be an attempt to convey something of the impact that the term would have on the original listeners. Later he refers to baptism in the name of "Jesus the Anointed". Op. cit., p.52.

1. Of course ἐπί has a wide range of further meanings appropriate to various contexts. Bauer lists nearly four pages (in small print) of meanings for the preposition. W. Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted from W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur (5th ed., 1958; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp.285-9. Moulton and Milligan say the uses of ἐπί are hardly less varied than those of ἐν. They continue: "From one point of view, indeed, they are even more varied, as ἐπί is the only preposition which continues to be largely represented with all three cases". Moulton and Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p.232.

Acts the name formula occurs 34 times.¹ Although due allowance must be made for the length of Acts, this is still considerably more than other New Testament documents use it. The fourth gospel has 21 references, by far the nearest rival to Acts for frequency of usage. The Pauline corpus is very barren, with 2 Corinthians and Galatians never using the formula. Revelation has about 11 references, though there it is hard to be sure when 'name' is or is not being given a special sense.² Certainly the writer of Acts seems to use the phrase freely, and this is true of type of use as well as frequency. For example, in 3:6 the name formula is used as a term of authority in commanding the beggar to walk; in 3:16 the name is substituted for Christ as the object of the beggar's faith; in 4:12 there is a similar substitution, but this time the name is used as the means of salvation; in 4:18 the sense is 'on behalf of' Jesus; in 4:30 it is the agency for divine wonders; 5:41 finds name almost equalling 'cause'; in 10:43 it is the means to forgiveness; in 16:18 it is the authority for exor-

1. At 2:21, 38; 3:6, 16 (twice); 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40, 41; 8:12, 16; 9:14, 15, 16, 21, 27, 29; 10:43, 48; 15:14, 17, 26; 16:18; 19:5, 13, 17; 21:13; 22:16; 26:9.

2. A full NT breakdown of the frequency of occurrence of the name formula is: Mt., 16; Mk., 9; Lk., 11; Jn., 21; Acts, 34; Rom., 5; 1 Cor., 6; 2 Cor., 0; Gal., 0; Eph., 2; Phil., 2; Col., 1; 1 Thess., 0; 2 Thess., 2; 1 Tim., 1; 2 Tim., 1; Tit., 0; Philem., 0; Heb., 4; Jas., 3; 1 Pet., 1; 2 Pet., 0; 1 Jn., 3; 2 Jn., 0; 3 Jn., 1; Jude, 0; Rev., 11.

cism. There is a wide range of use of ὄνομα here in Acts, which largely reflects the variety we spoke of before with respect to $\text{ἐν} \text{ὀνόματι}$.¹ The obvious problem is to decide on the sense appropriate to this baptismal reference. Is it baptism on the authority of Jesus, through the agency of Jesus, on behalf of Jesus, in the cause of Jesus, or even in some sense in the person of Jesus?² Of these the last is almost certainly to be ruled out for ἐπὶ would not normally be given the sense of 'into', and neither the immediate or wider context would lend support to such an understanding. The idea of agency is also a less likely one, for (as at 4:30) we would then expect the preposition διὰ. Any of the other three options could 'fit', and would make reasonable sense. If it is held that Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize, then a baptism on the authority of Jesus is possible. If some of the disciples had baptized in Jesus' stead, while with him (cf., Jn.4:1-2), then a baptism on behalf of Jesus is possible. If the

1. See above, pp.241ff.

2. Haenchen suggests: "Luke presupposes the form of baptism practised in his own community: the name 'Jesus Christ' is pronounced over the candidate". E. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, trans., B. Noble and G. Shinn, rev., R.McL. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p.184. Similarly, Southward writes: "Probably ἐπὶ ὀνόματι means...on, that is on condition of professing, the Name". W.T. Southward, The Acts of the Apostles (Cambridge: J. Hall & Son, 1890), p.24. However, while 22:16 may well lend some support to the idea of the candidate pronouncing the name of Jesus at baptism, this verse is not obviously speaking of that.

disciples saw baptism as in some sense a watershed between unbelief and belief, a decisive act whereby the person identified himself with the Christians, then a baptism in the cause of Jesus is possible. There is no way to decide finally which of these options is best.

Perhaps certainty is not necessary in any case, for the point of the phrase ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is to associate the baptism with Jesus, as distinct from any other baptism (such as John's). Caird says: "The first and weightiest rule of speech is that context determines meaning".¹ Peter's words are spoken in a context in which Jesus is the all-important person.² This is to be a baptism related to Jesus Christ. The phrase does characterise the baptism in the sense that it reveals its peculiarity as Christian baptism, but that fact apart it does not describe the baptism.

If we are to try and conclude what description of baptism there is in this verse, then it lies more precisely in the phrase εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν.

1. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.49.

2. Going on from his assertion that context determines meaning, Caird says: "A whole theology of the New Testament might well be written under this heading, since it is the contention of its contributors that with the coming of Jesus the whole situation of mankind has so altered as to change the semantic content of the word 'God'. God becomes 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Cor.1:3; Eph.1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3). The Day of the Lord becomes 'the Day of our Lord Jesus' (2 Cor.1:14)." Ibid., p.51. He goes on to give further examples.

It is a baptism in which εἰς ἄφεσιν speaks "of the object or aim of the baptism".¹ Precisely the relationship between that baptism and the forgiveness of sins, whether it is the baptism or the preceding repentance (implying faith) which results in that pardon, are matters for others.² Perhaps, if baptism is a person's "act and expression of repentance"³ and "vehicle of faith",⁴ then distinctions are irrelevant, at least when dealing with this material. For Luke here, the context of baptism was the same context as that of repentance, and the result was the forgiveness of sins.

The context, as we previously noted, is also one of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some consider baptism to be the means by which the Spirit is given. Lampe contrasts John's baptism and baptism here in Acts along these lines:

"The baptism of John...was an act of prophetic symbolism expressive of the cleansing of a faithful Remnant in preparation for the expected 'baptism'

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1. T.E. Page, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1930), p.94.
 2. Discussions on this issue with respect to John's baptism may be found in E. Schweizer, The good news according to Mark, trans., D.H. Madvig (London: SPCK, 1971), pp.32-3, and H.G. Marsh, The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), pp.40ff. With reference to the issue in Acts, see Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, pp.97ff.
 3. Dunn, op. cit., p.98.
 4. Ibid., p.100.

of Spirit and fire in the Messianic age. The Christian rite, as we meet it after Pentecost, is still a baptism of water accompanied by repentance, but it is administered in the name of Jesus and through it the Spirit is actually bestowed." 1.

Here a very definite connection between baptism and the gift of the Spirit is envisaged. Beasley-Murray thinks this is especially so in this passage:

"Whatever the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, there appears to be no doubt as to the intention of Acts 2.38; the penitent believer baptized in the name of Jesus Christ may expect to receive at once the Holy Spirit, even as he is assured of the immediate forgiveness of his sins". 2.

Others are more hesitant as to the closeness of the association between baptism and the gift of the Spirit. Lake and Cadbury regard baptism here as "leading up to, if not actually conveying, the gift of the Spirit". 3. Dunn is even more dogmatic: "The sacrament and the heavenly gift must certainly not be identified. ...There is absolutely no ground for saying that the Holy Spirit is given by or through water-baptism - especially in Luke." 4. He holds that Luke still considered water-baptism to have a preparatory role only, expressing the

1. Lampe, op. cit., p.33.

2. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.108.

3. K. Lake and H.J. Cadbury, The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles, eds., F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, IV (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1933), p.26. There is some ambiguity in their phrase, but they are certainly less definite than those previously quoted.

4. Dunn, op. cit., pp.98-9.

repentance and loyalty to Jesus necessary for the baptism of the Spirit to take place. He continues:

"In Acts the two baptisms remain distinct; for it is a striking fact that in no case is the Spirit given through water-baptism or even simultaneously with water-baptism. ...The view which regards 2.38 as proof that water-baptism is the vehicle of the Spirit is one which has no foundation except in the theology of later centuries." 1.

The fact of the matter is that either view - that the gift of the Spirit follows almost automatically upon baptism, or that baptism is no more than a preliminary (albeit necessary) stage prior to the separate gift of the Spirit - can be taken from this one reference. The words quoted from Peter may be interpreted in either way. For our purposes the difference is of little consequence. There is most certainly some kind of link spoken of between baptism and the receiving of the Spirit. Baptism is not only the context of the forgiveness of sins but also the context of the gift of the Spirit.

It is these two aspects which stand out in relation to baptism. There is no metaphor as such used of baptism. There is no reason to doubt that Peter meant anything other than the act of being immersed in water. All we can point to in this literal reference to baptism is its associated themes of repentance (belief) and forgiveness of sins, and the Spirit. The first of these, interestingly, gets further support in the first part of

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.100.

v.41: οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδέξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ
 ἰβαπτίσθησαν. There the reference to baptism is as a
 response to 'receiving' or 'welcoming' the word, that
 is, 'believing', and so reinforces the view of baptism as
 associated with the coming to faith in Jesus.

The first reference to baptism in Acts, then, is
 one which emphasises its character as Christian baptism
 and associates it with the themes of belief, forgiveness,
 and the Spirit.

Acts 8:12-17

This is a passage much beloved by liturgists who
 especially seem to enjoy the debates concerning the poss-
 ibility that some kind of confirmation is taking place
 in vv.14ff. Again, nothing of this lies within our field
 of study.

The verses which actually speak of baptism are 12,
 13 and 16. The first two of these are undoubtedly lit-
 eral references to baptism, stating the fact of these
 baptisms taking place. There are no qualifiers, no
 jostling metaphors. In fact, there is no real descrip-
 tion at all of the baptisms other than that they took
 place. But, once again, it is worth noting the emphasis
 on belief in both verses. In v.12 there is a brief
 summary of Philip's preaching: περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ
 θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The response
 is summed up in an aorist, ἐπίστευσαν.¹ However, the

1. Haenchen contrasts this with the earlier use of the
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structure of the sentence and the use of ὅτι make it clear that this response led straight on to baptism. The pattern is repeated in v.13. Rackham comments: "...and many began to carry their belief into action by being baptized".¹ Certainly we have a very close link here between baptism and the coming to faith, presumably faith concerning 'the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ'.

The reference to baptism in v.16 must be taken carefully in its context. There the complete nature of the Samaritans' baptism is not being described but, rather, its limited nature. Their baptism was solely εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ. The Holy Spirit had not fallen - their baptism, it would seem by the words μόνον δέ, lacked something, and the most logical explanation of v.16 as a whole is that their baptism should have been also in the name of the Holy Spirit.² However, it was not, and as part of Philip's preaching had concerned τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, then it is that same name which is used to characterise the baptism administered by Philip. We have noted before that

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imperfect (προσεῖχον) in vv.6-10. Op. cit., fn., p.303.

1. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles, p.115.
2. The reference in v.12 to the preaching about God and Jesus, when combined with this implication about the Holy Spirit, if justified, could lead logically to a baptism not far removed from the trinitarian form of Mt.28:19.

outside of Matthew, the epistles and Revelation, no strict reliance can be placed on εἰς or ἐν because they are often confused.¹ This must apply here, and, therefore, no particular significance should be attached to the occurrence of εἰς. And neither does the context guide us to any specific meaning for εἰς. What the context does tell us, what Luke wants to convey, is that the baptism concerned only the Lord Jesus, not the Holy Spirit as well.²

The implication is clear that the Holy Spirit has somehow been left out. Whether Philip omitted to pray for the converts to receive the Spirit, whether he did not believe he should, or whether he was unable to, all are possible explanations. The first is hardly likely, however, and if this Philip is the same as that mentioned at 6:5 (a not unreasonable supposition considering the unexplained way his name appears at the beginning of this preaching story, and the description at 21:8 of Philip as an evangelist who was one of the seven), then he presumably fulfilled the qualification of being one of those who were full of the Spirit (6:3) and was

1. See above, p.131. Blass and Debrunner in fact see them as confused particularly by Luke in Acts. Blass and Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, p.110.

2. Haenchen comments that Philip's baptism "lacked the most essential element, that which could have distinguished it from the baptism of John - the Spirit!" Op. cit., p.308. Certainly a lack of the Spirit is recognised, but the reference to Jesus most certainly does distinguish the baptism from John's.

familiar with the practice of the laying on of hands (6:6), factors which would suggest he might be precisely the person to feel he should pass on the gift of the Spirit. This would leave the view that somehow there was nothing he could do to effect the giving of the Spirit. Lake and Cadbury say: "The meaning of this short story clearly is that the Apostles in Jerusalem wished to give the Samaritans the gift of the Spirit which they knew that Philip's baptism could not confer. ...The narrative certainly implies Apostolic power to confer the Spirit." ¹. Hanson thinks this story reflects a somewhat forlorn attempt of the Jerusalem church to keep pace with uncontrolled evangelizing activity and retain control over the Christian movement. "The visit to Samaria of two of them (perhaps as representatives of the Church of Jerusalem) suggests an effort to keep up with the pace of events, a pace which was bound in the end to outstrip the efforts of the mother Church to keep control over her people. This will not be the last of such efforts in Acts." ². The first of these views was that Philip's baptism could not confer the Spirit; the latter almost suggests Philip was not allowed to confer the Spirit, an interesting further option (but implying an unlikely ability on behalf of the early church to control the giving of the Spirit).

1. Lake and Cadbury, op. cit., p.92.

2. R.P.C. Hanson, The Acts (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.108.

Whatever the explanation of the lack of the Spirit until the visit of the apostles, the narrative does leave the impression that something unusual has occurred and must quickly be rectified since the Spirit had not fallen on the Samaritans at baptism. Whether or not Philip was at fault in administering an incomplete baptism - that implication certainly being quite possible from the wording (especially *μόνον δὲ*) of v.16 - the feeling is left that the Spirit ought to have been present at baptism.

This passage on the whole, then, tells of a baptism associated with the act of belief, and a baptism which was incomplete due to the lack of the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:36-39

It is interesting to ponder the reason for the inclusion of the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Luke's account of the early church. It is not as if huge numbers of people are involved - only one convert. It is not as if we are being given a whole series of stories under an implied heading of 'Exploits of an Early Evangelist, Philip', for Philip virtually disappears after this (until briefly mentioned in 21:8). Rackham seems to feel the incident is included as a comparison: "There is a contrast between Simon Magus and this Ethiopian treasurer which recalls the contrast between Gehazi and the stranger Naaman who was baptized in the

Jordan".¹ Certainly the incident follows closely on the latter part of the Simon narrative, though Simon does 'repent' eventually (8:24), and therefore does not finish too badly. Perhaps a better reason for this story's inclusion is that it represents yet another widening of the circle of belief away from Jerusalem. First we find the gospel among the Samaritans. Then it is being carried by an important dignitary all the way to Ethiopia. Even such as he is baptized.

Other than Philip's seemingly miraculous mode of transportation (vv.39-40), perhaps the most remarkable thing in this narrative is the simple fact that it is the Ethiopian who requests baptism. He appears to raise the subject. No real detail is given of Philip's message to him other than that it arose out of the eunuch's reading of Isaiah and that Philip εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν (v.35). Suddenly they pass by some water and the eunuch asks: ἰδοὺ ὕδωρ· τί κωλύει με βαπτισθῆναι; Why should he ask that? Bruce offers two possible explanations: "Either the eunuch had learned something of the Christian movement at Jerusalem, or Philip had wound up his exposition with words such as Peter used at Pentecost (ii.38)".² It does not much matter to us which of these is correct.³ (Both

1. Rackham, op. cit., p.120.

2. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, p.194.

3. Nor does it really matter to us if some explanation
(Contd.)

are possible, the latter being more likely.) What we do find once again is that when a conversion is taking place, baptism immediately occurs. The act of believing and the act of being baptized hardly seem to be distinguished.

Were v.37 to be admissible, then this conclusion would naturally be reinforced. As C.S.C. Williams says, the probable reason for the addition "was to remove the difficulty felt at the sudden, almost unprepared, baptism of the eunuch".¹ Naturally, the verse is therefore a confession of faith, of belief, and hence baptism is viewed as an event connected with the coming to faith of a convert.

But the fact of this verse's absence from the best

Contd.)

other than these two is correct, e.g., that this incident follows an idealised pattern, or the pattern of later established practice. We are looking for metaphors used of baptism or, at least, the contexts in which baptism is set. That we can still study no matter what 'events', if any, lie behind Luke's writing.

1. C.S.C. Williams, A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, p.120. Blaiklock, pointing out the weight of evidence which compelled the RV to put the verse into the margin, sombrely adds: "...it is the business of the Lower Criticism to discover and accept what the writer originally wrote, and neither to add to nor take away from it". Blaiklock, The Acts of the Apostles, p.82. Most modern commentators accept that this verse is from the hand of a later editor, but several express sentiments similar to Hanson: "This verse, however, is valuable for giving us a very early doctrinal formula which is independent of the N.T. It probably represents the earliest known form of a baptismal creed." Op. cit., p.111.

manuscripts ^{1.} only goes to highlight all the more the emphasis on the baptism as the means of expressing the eunuch's new found faith in Jesus. After his question no more words are spoken - just the act of baptism takes place. The whole focus in terms of the response to the gospel is on baptism. Beyond this setting there is no clue given regarding the meaning of the baptism. The words in v.38, καὶ ἐβάπτισεν αὐτόν, could hardly be plainer. There is no elaboration, no metaphors are used.

And this time there is no explicit association of the giving of the Holy Spirit with the act of baptism. The Western text at v.39 has the Spirit falling on the eunuch and an angel snatching Philip away, "a reading" Lampe says, "which suggests that the Western scribe or editor was puzzled by the story (as we are) and improved it in the obvious fashion". ^{2.} But Lampe also has a different way of finding a reference to the Spirit here, one which does not involve using the Western text. Going on to quote several verses where χάρις is associated with the Spirit, he says: "It is conceivable...that the eunuch is described as going on his way rejoicing

1. The verse is a Western addition, not appearing in p(45, 74) Δ A B C 33 81 614 vg syr(p, h) cop(sa, bo) eth, but included by E, many minuscules, it(gig, h) vg(mss) syr(h with) cop(G67) arm. See Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, p.359. Metzger comments: "There is no reason why scribes should have omitted the material, if it had originally stood in the text". Op. cit., p.359.

2. Lampe, op. cit., pp.64-5.

(χαίρων), not as a mere piece of 'padding' to the narrative, but to indicate that he was in fact possessed of the Spirit after his baptism".¹ It hardly needs stating that Luke must be presumed to think that his readers have very subtle minds to be able to pick up such a reference. Surely it is fairer simply to say there is no mention of the Spirit here in connection with the eunuch. If Luke did include the story in order to illustrate the ever-widening circle of faith, then he may have felt the story as it stood did the job sufficiently.

Regarding baptism we have once more a literal reference, no metaphors being involved. Associated closely with baptism is the theme of belief.

Acts 9:18

This forms part of one of the three narratives in Acts of the conversion of Saul. The other accounts are at 22:3-21 and 26:4-23. These accounts are not identical, the last not mentioning any baptism. Even in 22:16, the other baptismal reference, the wording is different from that here, and since the wording of the references to baptism is a matter of some significance to us, we shall not conflate the verses but treat them separately.

We must resist the temptation to argue too strongly

1. Lampe, op. cit., p.65.

for some great significance in the fact that baptism is mentioned at all, for then we would have to devote an equal amount of energy to explaining why it was omitted in ch.26. What is certainly true is that its mention in the narrative marks a decisive moment in Paul's conversion. That Paul, the zealous Pharisee, should accept ministry at all at the hands of the Christian, Ananias, is startling enough, but perhaps his blindness could be considered as a compelling reason. But that he, as that devoted Pharisee, should accept baptism is truly remarkable. We are not told here that it carried a sense of repentance, but it does mark the turning point between Paul's old life and his new life as a Christian. That begins immediately with his taking food and being strengthened,¹ and quickly continues with his stay amongst the disciples in Damascus. Thus, while *ἡ βαπτισθῆναι* appears as a literal word in the passage, it is there as a pivot word, baptism being represented as the turning point for Paul.

There is possibly one other clue in the passage regarding the significance of baptism. Lake and Cadbury bring this out in a comment on v.17:

"It is noteworthy that the message of Ananias was that Paul 'should regain his sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit,' and that in the sequel he regained his sight and was baptized. This is one of the many incidental indications that, at least

1. C.S.C. Williams says: "The partaking of food was often meant to indicate that the cure of a patient was complete, cf. Mark v.43...". Op. cit., p.124.

in some circles of early Christians, baptism was regarded as conveying the gift of the Spirit..."¹.

The conclusion taken from this sequence is not compelling, though it has much in its favour. It could be argued that the whole experience of the healing included being filled with the Spirit, and the baptism only followed in time on that occurrence; or, even simpler, that v.18 just does not mention the being filled with the Spirit but takes the promise of v.17 for granted. Nevertheless, both these arguments do sound less likely options than that Luke presupposed some experience of the Spirit to be included in the baptism.

If that is so (and, since we are dealing with something taken to be 'implied', certainty is impossible), then the two themes associated with baptism here are conversion and being filled with the Spirit.

Acts 10:47-48

The most discussed feature of the Cornelius narrative is the sequence of events whereby the gift of the Spirit precedes baptism in water. Hanson says that for this reason the incident "was irregular and abnormal

1. Lake and Cadbury, op. cit., p.104. Hanson comments on vv.17-18: "Notice how implicitly Luke identifies baptism with the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was his regular assumption. When we find divergences from this view, it is time to look for sources." Op. cit., p.115. In fact, if v.12 is also taken into consideration, there is a three-fold development of the narrative: regain sight (v.12); regain sight and be filled with Spirit (v.17); regains sight and is baptized (v.18).

for Luke".¹ Lampe almost lodges a protest: "The situation is unique, and...in no way typical of the relation of the bestowal of the Spirit to Baptism...".² And Foakes-Jackson seems to strike a slightly despairing note as he writes: "In this chapter the remarkable fact is that the Spirit fell upon the Gentiles before baptism. The doctrine of the sacrament in Acts appears to be very undeveloped."³

But perhaps the comment made by Lake and Cadbury in another context is no less pertinent here: "The source of the trouble is that we ask questions which never entered the minds of early Christians".⁴ For, an examination of the whole narrative shows clearly that there were no problems for the early church regarding the sequence of events. What did cause the surprise for Peter and his companions was that the Holy Spirit should fall on Gentiles (10:45), and the furore back in Jerusalem was that the missionary party should have mixed with Gentiles (11:3). It is to these factors, not at all to the sequence whereby baptism followed the gift of the Spirit, that Peter addresses himself in ch.11, culminating in his statement of v.17. Therefore,

1. Hanson, op. cit., p.125.

2. Lampe, op. cit., p.75.

3. F.J. Foakes-Jackson, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), p.95.

4. Lake and Cadbury, op. cit., p.98.

if attention is paid to the sequence issue, such attention can arise only out of modern questions of procedure, and not from the text itself.¹

What is far more interesting for our purposes is to see once more the context in which the reference to baptism appears. The most obvious facet is the prominence of the Holy Spirit in the story. In ch.10 it is said that ἐπέσεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀκούοντας τὸν λόγον (v.44). Here the metaphor by which the coming of the Spirit is described is one of 'falling'. In the next verse it is one of 'pouring out': ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκκέχυται. Finally (v.47), the metaphor is a simple one of 'receiving': οἷτινες τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔλαβον... These metaphors are further supported in ch.11. There, at v.15, ἐπιπίπτω recurs, and in v.16 Peter quotes almost the precise words attributed to Jesus in 1:5, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, another metaphor (a baptism not in water but in the Holy Spirit). The cumulative effect of the multiplicity of models in this context is to heighten the sense of importance of what is being talked about.²

1. R.R. Williams, however, makes a comment which is interesting on the level of redaction criticism: "Notice how God takes the initiative all through this story, even to the end. The Spirit comes first: then baptism follows. Luke means us to be in no doubt that God was behind the admission of Gentiles: this is natural, for most of the rest of the book is to be about this subject." R.R. Williams, The Acts of the Apostles, p.93.

2. On this in general, see above, pp.81f.

Given that the realisation that Gentiles were to be included in the church was a dramatic occurrence, then the language is particularly appropriate. It serves to reveal the startling nature of this moment. And the moment immediately becomes one of baptism (in water). There is a very close connection in the text between the coming of the Spirit and the baptizing of the converts. The nature of Peter's question in 10:47, μήτι τὸ ὕδωρ δύναται κωλύσαι τις τοῦ μὴ βαπτισθῆναι τούτους...; implies that they must be entitled, or ought, to be baptized because they had received the Spirit. The receiving of the Spirit and baptism belong together.

The notions of the forgiveness of sins and of coming to belief are also very obviously present in this narrative. They are foreshadowed in v.43, in that Peter is held to be explaining belief and forgiveness at precisely the moment the Spirit falls. The coming of the Spirit, with the added features of speaking in tongues and magnifying God, implies the acceptance of Peter's message by Cornelius and the assembled gathering. It is on that basis that Peter commands their baptism ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.¹ Here we find yet another preposition in use with the name formula, reinforcing the conviction

1. Bruce points out that grammatically these words might be taken with προσέταξεν rather than βαπτισθῆναι. But he refers to 2:38 and other passages in Acts where the wording is similar, and concludes that it is "fairly certain" that the name formula belongs to βαπτισθῆναι. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, p.228.

that no great precision is intended by any one of them. Luke characterises their baptism in this way because he wants there to be no doubt that they underwent Christian baptism. Their baptism ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is vital evidence along with their experience of the Spirit that they now belong to the Christian body, that being the argument about to be used for their acceptance, though Gentiles. Because of this new state of affairs Peter is prepared to stay with them. "Peter's staying 'for some days' with the Christians of Caesarea (his acceding to their request is implicit in the context) demonstrates that he regards them as Christians in the full sense and as 'clean'".¹

These features are all the more explicit in the narrative in ch.11. According to Peter's report in v.14, the purpose of the apostolic visit, as stated by the angel to Cornelius, was for Cornelius and his household to be 'saved'. The motif of belief which we have just seen to be implied in the gift of the Spirit in ch.10 is spelled out by Peter in 11:17. And the conclusion of the gathering in Jerusalem after hearing the report is: ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς Ἰωὴν ἔδωκεν (v.18). The falling of the Spirit is obviously seen as the moment of salvation, conversion, repentance for Cornelius and household, and it is then that their baptism takes place.

1. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, p.354.

The whole issue of sequence we find, then, not to be relevant to the passage. Baptism is, however, very much connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and also with the coming to belief of those baptized.

Acts 16:15

To some extent vv.11-15 here serve as scene-setting for what is to follow. Luke establishes the riverside as the meeting place, the location to which Paul and his companions are going, as a background fact for the story of the encounter with the girl with the spirit of divination. And he establishes Paul's base in Philippi at the home of one of the first converts, Lydia.

If Luke is setting the scene in this part of the narrative, then we should perhaps not expect any developed insights into the significance of Lydia's baptism. Indeed, the narrative is noticeably bald, ὥς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς ... There are no metaphors used about baptism, no developed theology of baptism to be found.

The only matter which deserves to be noticed is that Luke seems once more to consider baptism as a response of faith. In v.14 it is said of Lydia that ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ Παύλου. This quaint expression is obviously meant to convey that Lydia had become a believer, and this is followed immediately by the mention of her baptism.

That reference to baptism is used also to introduce her offer of accommodation for Paul and his party, and we find her saying: εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι ... Furneaux says of this: "They had recognised her faith by admitting her to baptism. If she was fit for that, surely she was fit to be their hostess." ¹. Baptism and faith (or, 'being faithful') belong together here.

There is no amplification of the reference to baptism. It is simple and literal, and set in a belief context.

Acts 16:33

The conversion of the Philippian jailer and his family is recounted with great drama. It is not difficult to imagine that this story became rather popular in the early church: how the world's powers tried to shut up and lock up God's messengers, but God knocked down the prison and converted the jailer! Add to that the frightened embarrassment of the authorities on discovering Paul's Roman citizenship, their apology and request to 'please leave the city', and the tale ought to have been in the repertoire of any early preacher.

1. W.M. Furneaux, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p.262. Lake and Cadbury paraphrase εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι as "if you really look on me as a Christian". Op. cit., p.192. Haenchen says: "Lydia is already recognized as a Christian through her baptism". Op. cit., p.495.

The story is a mixture of considerable detail and infuriating vagueness. We have graphic description of the geography of the prison, the fetters worn, the behaviour of Paul and Silas, the earthquake and the reaction to it (vv.24-31). Then we have one verse (v.32) which is intended to cover the whole of the content of the Christian message Paul and Silas passed on, and we should dearly have liked to have known what that was. But we are not told - as Haenchen says, "the narrative here condenses events in the extreme...".¹ Then we are back to a much more detailed narrative of washing of wounds, baptism, a meal and rejoicing (vv.33-4), and these lead in to the fairly explicitly described conclusion to the Philippian visit (vv.35-40).

Despite the vagueness at a point where we should have welcomed more detail, it is perfectly clear that this story is one of conversion, and the baptism is obviously set in that context. The direction in which the story is going becomes clear in v.30 with the 'loaded' question, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; What precisely the jailer meant by this is unclear. Findlay thinks he had heard the clairvoyant slave-girl declare that these men announce ὁδὸν σωτηρίας and this, with a background knowledge that all the mystery-cults also offered salvation, led to the question.² Furneaux

1. Haenchen, op. cit., p.498.

2. See J.A. Findlay, The Acts of the Apostles (London: SCM Press, 1934), pp.153-4.

recognises the possibility of the jailer having heard the divining girl, and continues: "But it is more likely that he vaguely sought deliverance from the dangers, seen and unseen, which beset him".¹ Given that his life had been and was in physical danger, from the earthquake, the prisoners, and from the authorities if any prisoners escaped, his question is logical on a very ordinary level. What is illogical is that, if his question is on that level, he should ask it of Paul and Silas who to him ought to have been just two more prisoners. It seems to be implied that he saw something special in them, and therefore turned to them with this particular question. Haenchen, referring to v.29, takes it that way: "The trembling of the man and his falling down before Paul and Silas prove that he considered them the mighty messengers of the godhead".²

What is not in any doubt is the nature of their reply to the jailer (v.31): *πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου*. Furneaux says: "They answer him according to the deepest sense

1. Furneaux, op. cit., p.268.

2. Haenchen, op. cit., p.497. He notes also that the jailer was "not threatened by any evil consequences, since all the prisoners are still there". Op. cit., fn., p.498. At the end of the section on the Philippian events, Haenchen asserts that in these matters Luke followed the tradition in his writing of the great Roman historians to whom it did not occur to say simply 'how it happened'. He adds: "...he narrated the history of the mission in Philippi in his own fashion. The difference between *facta* and *ficta* has not been the same in all ages." Op. cit., p.504.

of his words. If he meant temporal salvation, they will mean spiritual. If he called them lords and appealed to them for safety, they will tell him of the Lord who alone could save him." ¹. Obviously Paul and Silas preach to him and his family the Christian message (v.32), and this is believed. "He accepts the message, showing his acceptance first by the practical step of tending the wounds he had caused, then by baptism..., then by a common meal..." ². The culmination of this part of the narrative is the triumphant clause: καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο πανοικὲς πεπιστευκῶς τῷ Θεῷ (v.34). Before he had not believed, now he did. The middle event around which this transition has occurred is baptism. Schnackenburg says, with reference to this passage, that the early church knew baptism "as a decisive means of deliverance". ³.

It is clear that there is no development in any metaphorical terms of the reference to baptism. Again we have a quite literal reference to the act of baptism, and thus our only way at all to understand anything of the significance being attached to it has been to look at its context, here clearly one of salvation/belief. Lampe tries very hard here also to discern a reference to the Spirit. He views ἠγαλλιάσατο ... πεπιστευκῶς

1. Furneaux, op. cit., p.268.

2. R.R. Williams, op. cit., p.124.

3. Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, p.10. That statement he also applies to Acts 2:38; Jn.3:3-5; 1 Pet.3:20f.; Mk.16:16.

(v.34) as a significant phrase, for "ἀγαλλιᾶσθαι and its substantive always in the New Testament signify spiritual joy, which is a divine endowment, and is, indeed, a part of the expected blessings of the 'last days'; again, therefore, the thought of 'joy' is close to that of reception of the Spirit".¹ However, there is no way from this to read a 'reception of the Spirit' into the text here. Why such a giving of the Spirit is not mentioned is not for us to investigate. In this instance only the 'belief' theme is associated with baptism.

Acts 18:8

We need not be detained long by this verse, for the reference, and its context, is obvious and straightforward. Paul has abandoned his preaching to the Jews in Corinth, and turns to the Gentiles instead. This seems to bring much greater success, including the winning over of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue. (It is interesting that his conversion is mentioned only after Paul's decision to go to the Gentiles.) Of Crispus it is said that ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ. C.S.C. Williams sees a significance in the use of the aorist tense: "...the tense implies a single act, no doubt, of baptism".² That statement, of course, goes beyond the text, but is reasonable since

1. Lampe, op. cit., p.65.

2. C.S.C. Williams, A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, p.210.

Paul tells us of the baptism of Crispus (1 Cor.1:14). If his baptism is not intended in this phrase in Acts, then it is certainly included in the general reference to the baptism of many Corinthians, spoken of in the second half of the verse.

The wording there is significant for us, focussed as it is on three verbs: ἀκούω - πιστεύω - βαπτίζω. These verbs, with (in two instances) their imperfect tenses, describe the whole process of conversion. Baptism appears as part of that process, part of what it was for these Corinthians to become Christians. This is the context of this brief, literal, reference to baptism.

Acts 19:1-7

The passage is allowed by commentators, who again want to know answers to all manner of questions, to become immensely complicated. They want to know precisely who the μαθηταί are (v.1), what the reply, ἀλλ' οὐδ' εἰ πνεῦμα ἄγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν (v.2), could possibly mean, and, needless to say, they debate liturgical issues of procedure and parallels with confirmation. Our purpose is to determine solely in what light baptism is presented, and therefore we shall look to the passage only for that.

The first point to notice is the nature of Paul's two questions in vv.2-3. He begins, for some reason regarding which we have no information, by asking: εἰ

πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες ; When their reply is in the negative, he asks: εἰς τί οὖν ἐβαπτίσθητε ; This sequence of questions has a two-fold significance. For one thing the ignorance of these Ephesians regarding the Holy Spirit prompts Paul to ask about their baptism. Haenchen says: "If the twelve are in such a dire position in regard to the Spirit, then their baptism cannot be in order".¹ The precise wording εἰς τί might be taken, in a not dissimilar fashion to what we found with the baptism of the Samaritans in ch.8, to mean that their baptism should have been known to be εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον . Certainly the οὖν in the second question implies that a connection of some sort ought to have existed between their baptism and the Holy Spirit.

The other matter to notice in the two questions is Paul's ability to switch from πιστεύσαντες to ἐβαπτίσθητε. While there is no necessity to identify the two verbs as merely differing ways of saying the same thing, the logic of the conversation demands a close connection between the two. Dunn says: "In the case of the Ephesians the sequence of Paul's questions indicates that πιστεῦσαι and βαπτισθῆναι are interchangeable ways of describing the act of faith: baptism was the necessary expression of commitment, without which they could not be said to have truly 'believed'." ² This

1. Haenchen, op. cit., p.553.

2. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, p.96. Haenchen
(Contd.)

second factor is to some extent carried on in reverse in Paul's next section of the conversation in v.4. There he speaks of John's 'baptism' and leads in to the importance of 'belief' in Jesus. Then in v.5 the final interchange takes place. The Ephesians 'hear' of the importance of belief in Jesus, and so are 'baptized' in the name of Jesus. Thus we see that, beginning in Paul's part of the conversation but continuing right through the passage, belief and baptism are put together. Baptism is seen as belonging to belief.

The importance in the narrative of the Holy Spirit is obvious again in v.6, where the gift of the Spirit follows baptism and the laying on of Paul's hands. How closely vv.5 and 6 run together it is hard to say, but there is an on-going flow to the story so that the receiving of the Spirit appears as part of the one event with baptism, and not something belonging to a separate occasion. Lake and Cadbury say that "it seems probable that here at least the laying on of hands is regarded as the climax of baptism, for Paul obviously regards baptism as the source of the gift of the Spirit, and in the event the gift of the Spirit follows the laying on of his hands...".¹ The narrative opens with the realisation that these disciples lacked the Holy Spirit. It

Contd.)

writes on v.2: "πιστεύσαντες: Luke could also have written 'when you were baptized'". Op. cit., p.553.

1. Lake and Cadbury, op. cit., p.238.

closes with them receiving the Spirit. In between is the coming to belief in Jesus and baptism in his name.

Once more we have a reference to baptism εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, an identical expression to 8:16. However, it is not likely that a particular formula is intended by these words, since these are the only two occurrences of this wording and other passages have differing permutations of the wording (2:38; 10:48). Here the εἰς should be interpreted in parallel to its usage in v.4 where it characterises the nature of the belief as being belief in Jesus. So here it characterises the baptism as Jesus' baptism (as against John's baptism, v.3). The relation between the references to 'belief' and 'baptism' - their interchangeability - must be borne in mind in interpreting this phrase. Thus, what it means in v.4 to believe in the coming one, Jesus, is basically what it means in v.5 to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. In their baptism in the name of Jesus they have acted on their belief in him.

Leaving all other issues aside, two particular aspects of baptism emerge here - associations with belief and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22:16

This is the other reference in Acts to Paul's conversion which includes a mention of his baptism. As when dealing with ch.9, we shall keep to the passage before us and avoid comparisons.

Some considerable interest exists among commentators concerning the use of the middle voice here, *βάπτισαι*, with the possible implication of a self-administered baptism.¹ But more important for us than this literal reference to baptism are the words following: *καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου, ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*.

The first phrase is an obvious metaphor of washing, a familiar enough model from the Old Testament (e.g., Ps.51:2,7; Zech.13:1; etc.), and an understandable metaphor to use following a reference to baptism. In some way the baptism is viewed as leading to the removal of Paul's sins. Schnackenburg says that in this verse "the causative meaning is plain: 'Get baptized and washed!'".² Later he argues that this reference throws into relief the idea behind considering baptism as a bath: "...forgiveness of sins ensues from the means of washing employed, which, although applied to the body, effects the cleansing of the inner man".³ And C.S.C. Williams says: "A reference to Baptism and washing away of sins is typical of the conclusion to the Kerygma".⁴ Understandably, any hint of some sort of automatic effect

1. Though some point out that a meaning of 'have yourself baptized' or 'get yourself baptized' is as, if not more, probable. See Lampe, *op. cit.*, p.86; Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, p.403.

2. Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*, p.3.

3. *Ibid.*, p.7.

4. C.S.C. Williams, *op. cit.*, p.244.

of cleansing of sin from baptism makes other modern commentators nervous. Therefore Dunn argues here that "the washing away of sins is achieved on the human side not by water but by the calling upon the name of the Lord; not the rite itself but the attitude and commitment (for which it gave occasion and to which it gave expression) made the decisive contact with the Lord which resulted in cleansing".¹ He goes on to argue that βαπτίζειν and ἀπολούειν are not synonyms, nor are they causally related. He concludes: "They are co-ordinate actions, related through the ἐπικαλεσάμενος κτλ." ² Beasley-Murray also takes all the three significant verbs together: "...the exhortation to Paul... implies that his sins will be washed away in his baptism accompanied by prayer". ³

All that need be said here is that βάπτισαι and ἀπόλουσαι are set in very close relation to each other in the text, but the idea of calling on the name of Jesus is there too. In other words, there is no warrant for asking whether baptism by itself leads to the cleansing of sin for baptism is not mentioned here by itself. What we have is baptism associated with the washing away of sins, and with a cry of faith. The literal reference

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.98.

2. Ibid.

3. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p.102.

to baptism is set in a context of the forgiveness of sins and of belief.

What we have looked for from Acts are themes, background ideas, to 'colour' the references to baptism, to show something of the significance which baptism is regarded as having.

The first and most obvious thing to say is that we did not find any metaphors used of baptism in water, that is, the language structure surrounding baptism did not apply any metaphors precisely to baptism. The baptismal references used literal language, not pictures. Beasley-Murray says: "On the whole, the representations of baptism in Acts are primitive", ¹. and he means by this that they are a contrast to the 'developed' views of baptism in Paul, the Pastorals, and the Fourth Gospel. Flemington speaks similarly: "...the references in Acts would seem to reflect an early period of baptismal belief and practice, during which the rite was theologically significant, but far less explicitly so than it later became in the teaching of St. Paul and his successors". ².

But statements such as these must be tempered by two facts. One is simply the nature of the narrative

1. Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, p.98.

2. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p.38.

before us in Acts. Certainly Luke is not writing an 'objective history' (if such a thing is ever possible) but his introduction in 1:1ff. presupposes a similar intention regarding Acts to that stated in the introduction to the gospel, to write an orderly account (Lk. 1:3). That will of necessity mean that some sections rightly consist of little more than reportage, a setting down of what Luke believes to have happened. Regarding baptism, we found such bare reporting especially in the stories of Lydia and Crispus. But there is nothing 'primitive' about this, if that in any sense means that Luke could not have written in a more 'explicitly theologically significant' way. The point is that, given one aspect of Luke's purpose in writing Acts, he chose to avoid metaphor and use denotative language at some places. There is nothing primitive or undeveloped about that. A prose writer contrasted in such a manner with a poet would not care for such labels on his work. Neither does Luke deserve them.

The other fact can only be put forward cautiously. To say that literal language is more primitive can be to misrepresent the processes of language. Early in our studies ¹. we showed how quickly a metaphor can 'die' and become literal language. The word 'examine', for example, originally meant 'to weigh' (being from 'examen', the tongue of a balance), but can now be used

1. See above, pp.38ff.

readily in all manner of contexts where no thought of weighing is present (e.g., to examine with a microscope).¹ The original connotations of the word have gone; it is now a 'dead' metaphor which forms part of literal language. Luke finds himself unable to use βαπτίζω metaphorically. That could suggest that the word, by the time Luke is writing, has gone through this process of losing some of its original connotations and has become hardened in meaning within the religious context. Of course, when that process began is a difficult issue for the word is common not only in Christian usage, but also in that of John the Baptist, and, in many people's view, also by this time in the context of proselyte baptism. When we would hold that the hardening process began would depend on how far back we pushed the word in a religious context. The 'dying' of a metaphor need not take very long, especially within the writings of a particular community. That is, βαπτίζω could have retained a wide sense for much longer in general use after it had 'died' in meaning for Christians. Luke was a Christian writing for Christians. So was Paul, but it may be that he was writing up to two generations earlier than Luke, a significant gap of time. And, even in Paul's writings, the process of hardening can be detected, for we saw that 1 Cor.15:29, while an unusual verse, used βαπτίζω literally, as did 1 Cor.1:14-17.

1. This is an example given by Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, p.349.

Even by Paul's day the decay is setting in, and there should be no surprise, then, if it has run its course by the time Luke writes. If this is so, then Luke's language is not primitive, but developed. Caird says: "Where we find both a literal and a metaphorical version of a saying or event, it is commonly the literal which is secondary".¹ Where, then, we have both metaphorical and literal modes of speech regarding the same subject, as in general terms we do with Paul and Acts, then the primitiveness belongs to the metaphorical language. What Luke gives us is not baptismal language in its infancy but its maturity. His baptismal language is full-grown.

Not for one moment, however, does that relegate Luke to speaking only, at all points, of the act of baptism. If he is unable to use the verb itself to convey further meanings, Luke can do so by surrounding it with other language, some of it metaphorical, which, by its presence, will put some meaning into these references to baptism. And that is precisely what he does, and therefore we can have some idea of his view of baptism.

Every single baptismal context in Acts we found to be one of conversion. That in itself is hardly surprising, but the language surrounding baptism at these points is significant. Baptism was portrayed by Luke as an act of belief. In some instances references to

1. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, p.185.

belief (and similar expressions) were tied in very closely to the references to baptism, for example, at 8:12-13; 16:14-15, 30-34; 18:8; 19:1-7. One of the clearest of these was the last, the story of the 12 Ephesian disciples. There we noted that Luke felt quite able to change between language of belief and language of baptism, as if, to some extent, the one included or implied the other. In other passages, at precisely the point at which we might have expected a reference to the belief of the convert, we found instead that baptism was spoken of, for example, at 2:38; 8:36-9; 9:18; 10:47-8; 22:16. This can be well illustrated by a comparison of 2:38 with the non-baptismal verse 10:43, the latter being Peter's statement of the availability of forgiveness of sins through Jesus. In 10:43 the hearer (a) believes in him, (b) receives forgiveness of sins, (c) through his name. In 2:38 the hearers are (a) to be baptized, (b) in his name, (c) for the forgiveness of sins. Now, each of these verses contains other material as well, so the parallels are not precise. But even so, apart from a small change in sequence, it is clear that the major difference between the two verses is that where one speaks of belief the other speaks of baptism. Both statements are attributed by Luke to Peter. The implication is clear that there is a very close correlation in Acts between belief and baptism. Sometimes the two are put together; sometimes one is spoken of where we might expect the other.

This general facet has been noticed by several writers. Dunn says simply: "...one cannot say 'faith' without also saying 'water-baptism'...".¹ White describes baptism in Acts as "the mode of expression" of the response to the gospel of repentance and belief.² Beasley-Murray, talking of conversion in Acts, adds: "To such a conversion baptism 'belongs' as its embodiment, its completion and its seal".³ Flemington lists the references in Acts which link baptism with 'hearing the word' and 'believing', and says: "It is clear that for the earliest disciples baptism in some vivid way connoted and "symbolized" the Gospel message. It was what might be called an embodiment of the kerygma." ⁴

The danger of all these expressions is that someone will always demand to know what precise connection is held to exist between belief and baptism, and especially whether one can exist without the other.⁵ These may be questions which the church today needs to ask, but Luke's purpose in Acts was never to answer them. He does not attempt to spell out the connection, and

1. Dunn, op. cit., p.96.

2. White, The Biblical Doctrine of Initiation, p.180.

3. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.122.

4. Flemington, op. cit., p.49.

5. Dunn, for example, follows his earlier statement by emphasising the need to give the pre-eminence to faith: "Baptism gives expression to faith, but without faith baptism is meaningless, an empty symbol". Op. cit., p.97.

for our purposes we only need to state its existence. Baptism for Luke is one aspect of what it is to have faith in Jesus.

A related theme to this which we found in some contexts was the concept of the forgiveness of sins. It was quite explicit in 2:38 and 22:16, and perhaps implicit in 19:4-5 (there is no reason to think that the repentance which characterised John's baptism was not also appropriate to Christian baptism, and the idea of repentance implies a dealing with sins). Especially we noted how the phrase ἀπόλυσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου in 22:16 most vividly portrayed baptism as an act of moral as well as physical cleansing. Now that we have seen how closely belief and baptism go together in Acts, the issue we noted in dealing with 2:38 of whether it is the baptism or the belief that results in the forgiveness is found to be all the more a false issue. If one implies the other (and generally is hardly separated in time from the other), then Luke would never think of which was the 'effective' one. The belief expressed in baptism leads to forgiveness of sins. To go further than that to explain how this comes about is to go further than Luke chose to.

Given this closeness between belief and baptism, it is no matter for surprise that the latter is associated in Acts with the forgiveness of sins. For that is precisely what is attributed to belief in Jesus, as we saw in our comparison of 2:38 with 10:43. And there

are many other passages where forgiveness of sins (expressed in one way or another) is attributed to Jesus: 3:19, 26; 13:38-9; 15:9, 11; 16:31; 19:4; 26:18. If Jesus is viewed as the one who brings forgiveness of sins, then a baptism associated with this Jesus is going to be similarly characterised. Beasley-Murray says: "Cleansing is the primary meaning of baptism in all religious groups that have practised it; but when baptism is administered in the name of the Lord who died and rose for the 'blotting out' of sins (Acts 3.19), this aspect of its significance is immeasurably strengthened".¹ Baptism, then, is associated with belief, and because that belief is in a Jesus who brings forgiveness of sins, baptism is further seen in that light also.

The other theme which we found to be associated with baptism was that of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Cullmann asks: "Why does the transmission of the Spirit within the Church take the form of a Baptism?",² but Dunn rejects (as we saw earlier) all such views that baptism effects the giving of the Spirit: "If Luke is to be our guide...water-baptism can properly be described as the vehicle of faith; but not as the vehicle of the Spirit".³ Such a variety of views is a reflection of the varied relation of the Spirit to baptism in

1. Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, p.103.

2. Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p.10.

3. Dunn, *op. cit.*, p.100.

Acts. Commenting on this situation in Acts, Beasley-Murray says: "To account for these divergencies of practice and harmonize the theology (or theologies) presumed by them gives fair room for the exercise of ingenuity, and it cannot be said that it has been wanting in the explanations provided".¹ However, we are not required to exercise such ingenuity, but only to state that baptism and the Spirit do belong together in Acts. This was clear in 2:38; 8:15-17; 9:17-18; 10:44-8; 19:1-7. The last passage is particularly remarkable where we found in vv.2-3 that Paul, on discovering an absence of the Spirit, immediately asked about the Ephesians' baptism. That there should be a flaw in one led him to ask about the other. By what means or in what way we cannot say, but baptism and the Holy Spirit are frequently portrayed in Acts as belonging together.

Therefore, in this writer we have found two, or perhaps three, major themes associated with baptism. At all points baptism and belief are conjoined. The contexts of baptism are always those of conversion, of coming to faith in Jesus. Baptism appears as the expression in action of that belief. Associated with this theme, but carrying it one stage further, is the idea of cleansing, washing, purification from sin. Finally, baptism could be considered as, or at least leading to, an experience of the Spirit. We could not define the

1. Beasley-Murray, op. cit., p.105.

relationship between baptism and the Spirit but it existed nevertheless in a significant number of passages.

We might have decided that, since the references to baptism in Acts were literal rather than metaphorical, identifying that fact was enough of a task for us. However, we have gone on to elaborate the themes which surround Luke's portrayal of baptism in an attempt to gain some insight in that way into his understanding of the meaning, the significance, of baptism. Luke did not use metaphors to describe baptism, and we have only been able to discern his view of it by tracing recurring features in baptismal contexts. Because the baptismal references were literal, only a study in this way of the related themes could put 'colour' into these references. Only thus could we gain some insight into the significance of baptism for Luke, an insight which can be set against that given us by Paul's metaphors of baptism.

Flemington says: "The present writer would claim that the Pauline teaching concerning baptism, as indeed that of later New Testament writers, is far more intelligible when read as the product of reflection upon, and explication of, the early ideas about baptism represented in the Acts of the Apostles".¹ We have now some knowledge of these 'early' ideas about baptism and so, as we return to Paul, can determine the accuracy

1. Flemington, op. cit., p.38.

of Flemington's statement. As we proceed to gather the strands together from our studies of the various Pauline passages, it will emerge whether or not Paul's understanding of baptism is an elaboration (albeit using metaphor) of the themes we have found in Acts.

CONCLUSION

Our final task of drawing matters together and stating some conclusions is at once both simple and difficult. It is a simple task inasmuch as all that is to be said here arises out of what has gone before. But it is difficult too, for 'conclusions' are frequently interpreted as being the 'concrete, factual findings' of a study, and given the nature of this study: a look at the metaphorical language of baptism, then conclusions of that sort are not only hard to come by but quite inappropriate.

That statement, indeed, leads us into our first conclusion which is that almost universally Paul's language about baptism is metaphorical. The one exceptional reference was 1 Cor.15:29, the verse which spoke of baptism for the dead. Every other reference of Paul to baptism contained metaphor.

Paul never set out to write about baptism in his letters. Baptism, it would seem, was not a problem for the early Christians. Contrary to the situation prevailing in modern churches, there appear to have been no debates or arguments on that subject. Paul had no need to give instruction on baptism, correct any heresies, bring to an end any malpractice. When he wrote of baptism, it was to use its significance or its meaning as part of another argument. In Rom.6, baptism into Christ, and thereby into Christ's death, was used to show how the Christian was considered dead to sin; in Gal.3,

baptism appeared as the means whereby the Christian came to participate in God's promise to Abraham and his offspring (Christ); Col.2 showed Paul (or, as many would hold, some disciple of his) arguing that there was no need of any other philosophy, for in their baptism these believers were intimately related to the all-sufficient Christ; 1 Cor.1 was an argument for unity, part of that argument being based on their common relationship by baptism to Christ; 1 Cor.10 contained a warning that, even despite their closeness to Christ brought about in their baptism, by moral laxity these Christians could still be lost; 1 Cor.12 spoke of baptism in terms of entry into the body of Christ for the purpose of showing the Corinthians that they belonged together and needed each other; in 1 Cor.15 Paul referred to a particular practice of baptism on behalf of the dead, with a view to showing how silly this was without a positive belief in resurrection. The last of these references can be left on one side, for it referred to a baptism under unusual circumstances, and it was those unusual circumstances which were relevant to Paul's argument in the chapter. But in all the rest, in order to complete his case, Paul had to speak of the meaning of baptism itself. He had to give some kind of explanation of what took place for these Christians in that act.

Now, baptism is easy to refer to on a literal level, as an act, the physical wetting by water, but how was Paul to speak of its meaning? What language was avail-

able for that? Literal language could have been used to describe the amount of water used for the baptism, the length of time for which the baptisand was immersed, the words spoken on the occasion, etc. But none of that by itself would have conveyed the meaning. For that task Paul was forced to 'push' words beyond their normal use into the language of insight, of picture, of metaphor. By giving his readers a mental picture to consider, Paul was able to say something of the meaning of baptism, and therefore use baptism in his arguments.

The difference in purpose in writing is one of the reasons why such a contrast existed between the literal language of baptism in Acts and the metaphorical language of baptism in Paul. Luke was mentioning baptism for its own sake. He did not need to explain its 'inner' meaning in order to shed light on some other issue. Thus literal references to baptism were perfectly possible and acceptable, leaving a study of the surrounding contexts as our sole means of gaining any insight into the significance of baptism in Acts. Paul, however, wished to use the meaning of baptism for parenetic purposes, and to do this he had to employ metaphorical language. Therefore, we may develop our first conclusion, and say that there is no direct Pauline teaching at all on baptism, and almost our sole knowledge of his views comes by metaphor - this in no way lessening the importance of Paul's thought on baptism, for metaphorical language is a perfectly proper, and in this case the

only, mode of language for the subject in the way Paul purposed to speak of it.

Now we must say something regarding the particular nature of these metaphors. The first thing to notice is that each of the metaphors had to do with a relationship to Christ. Obviously 1 Cor.1:13 and 10:2 referred to Christ only by implication, and 1 Cor.12:13 for its own purposes spoke of the body of Christ. But all still viewed baptism as establishing a relationship to Jesus. That is even more clearly seen in comparison with Acts. The major themes there were belief, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit. Of course, the belief was in Jesus and the forgiveness of sins was attributed to him, and both of these involved a relationship with Jesus. Nevertheless it is still clear that a quite different significance was being attached to baptism in Acts from what was attached to it in Paul. Luke saw baptism as an expression of belief, as leading to the forgiveness of sins, as involved in receiving the Spirit. Only in Gal. 3:26-27 and 1 Cor.12:13 did Paul come anywhere near explicitly involving any of these. In the former, the reference to baptism did appear as an expression of what it was to have faith in Jesus. The baptism itself was still given a further significance, but there was an association with faith. In 1 Cor.12:13, the Holy Spirit was mentioned twice in close proximity to baptism. The Spirit was the agent effecting the baptism into the body, and an experience of the Spirit (to be spoken of either

as the Spirit being 'poured out' upon the believer, or the believer being given the Spirit to 'drink') followed on closely from the baptism. However, it is only in these two places, Gal.3:27 and 1 Cor.12:13, that it could easily be argued that Paul was using ideas about baptism which are found in Acts. Flemington's assertion that Paul's language about baptism could be considered to be the product of "reflection upon" and "explication of" the ideas and themes of Acts, ¹. seems to go too far. In a way different to the themes in Acts, baptism is viewed by Paul in terms of a personal relationship to Jesus.

But what is that personal relationship to Jesus? All through our study we have had considerable difficulty in describing it, a difficulty which is not surprising given the nature of metaphorical language. For we saw, before looking at anything written by Paul, that often no route existed to the knowledge of some matter other than by a metaphor. The matter in question could not be spoken of any other way except by this or that metaphor. We noted the impossibility of going 'behind' the paint and canvas to discover the meaning of a painting, and indicated that this was also true when metaphorical language was used to speak of some new matter (as distinct from using metaphorical language simply to enliven the meaning). Such language 'shaped' a matter in its own

1. See above, p.381.

way, and the insight it gave was not translatable. Literal language could not say what was pictured by a metaphor, any more than an explanation of a poem could reproduce the meaning of that poem. And although it might seem that another metaphor could be substituted, that was not possible either. Each metaphor also 'shaped' the view of its subject in a particular way, and no other metaphor could match that precisely. If Paul chose one picture by which baptism was to be understood, then no other picture would give the same understanding.

Our study has had to 'live' with this difficulty throughout, and we have had simply to repeat the metaphor or describe it by the use of various words (such as 'oneness', 'union', or 'solidarity') which could be considered appropriate to the metaphor.

Just as we have had to accept these limitations throughout our study, we have to accept them now. We cannot put Paul's metaphors to one side and speak in other terms. But there are two things which we can do. Firstly, we can gather together the metaphors of baptism from their different contexts. Then we shall be able to ascertain the extent of the similarity or difference between Paul's metaphors of baptism in each context. However, metaphors especially belong to their contexts (as we have just indicated), and the second thing we can do is to look at them, individually, in their own settings. But this time our purpose is to note again how they function in each passage. How does Paul use

any particular metaphor in his argument? What did that metaphor achieve in the discourse? Our knowledge of these metaphors will be greatly enhanced if we can obtain some answers to these questions. (Indeed, perceiving how they 'work' may be the only way available to us to come any nearer to understanding what particular significance is to be given to our terms, 'union', 'oneness', etc., by which we have described the metaphors hitherto.)

During the course of our studies of Paul's baptismal language, it will have become obvious that there was considerable harmony among the metaphors used by Paul. Of the six passages containing metaphorical language, half (Rom.6:3; Gal.3:27; 1 Cor.10:2) used the expression βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν, albeit one of these (1 Cor.10:2) only by implication. This we took to be a metaphor of immersion into Christ, a phrase conveying a picture of a deep union taking place in baptism between Christ and the baptisand. That half of Paul's metaphorical references to baptism should use the same phrase is significant enough, but, in fact, we discovered that much the same metaphor occurred in the other three places where Paul 'pictured' baptism. In Col.2 we found the idea of 'union with Christ' present as a 'super-model' underlying the whole passage. And by its light we were able to see clearly that Paul's words συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ Βαπτίσματι formed a metaphor which linked Christ and the Christian in a way not at all dissimilar to what

was meant by βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν. Baptism was still regarded as the place of uniting the baptisand to Christ, on this occasion specifically in the metaphoric expression of a shared burial. 1 Corinthians 1:13 differed from βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν only by the addition of τὸ ὄνομα (and, of course, the substitution for the purposes of the argument of the name of Paul for the name of Christ). But in this context, where the name formula was linked to a reference to an actual person, it was seen to point to a particular relationship with that person as established by baptism. Given the use again by Paul of the preposition εἰς, and the context, then a metaphor which spoke of a oneness between the Christian and Christ in baptism fitted best. In that same letter, Paul's reference in 12:13 to baptism substituted ἐν σῶμα for Χριστόν, but we found that Paul was referring nevertheless to the person of Christ, and used 'body-language' in order to introduce an illustration. Paul was telling the Corinthians that in their baptism they were all immersed into the same body - Christ's - and therefore they belonged to each other. Baptism was again the place of being united to Christ. Finally, we discovered how, even in the non-metaphorical reference to baptism in 1 Cor. 15:29, it was possible that the practice to which Paul referred could arise out of a belief that a person united in baptism to Christ would, by that union, share in Christ's resurrection.

There is, then, a consistency in Paul's choice of

metaphor concerning baptism, and all the metaphors involve a picture of baptism as uniting a person to Christ. We do not need to imagine Paul consciously devising such images on each occasion, as if he sat down to think up some novel way of telling a church about baptism. Paul, as we noted, never set out to speak about baptism - he was always engaged on some other topic, and in the midst of his arguing he used the fact of a particular relationship to Christ. It was one of union, and it was when Paul for some reason wanted to speak about the onset of the relationship that his mind flashed to baptism. His starting point was the oneness to Christ, and he used baptism to express that. But he would not have to think up the image each time. Union with Christ and baptism seem to have run together in Paul's mind. We, however, do not necessarily share Paul's fundamental thought patterns. Union with Christ may not be for us an automatic picture associated with baptism. In our minds Paul's picture may be only one way of thinking about baptism among many. Acts showed us but one set, the major set indeed, of alternatives. There baptism was not spoken of in the same way as by Paul. Its 'mottos' were 'belief', 'forgiveness of sins', 'Holy Spirit'. We carry these, and other ideas of baptism from other parts of the New Testament, around in our minds. Paul did not. He need not, for he could not, be presumed to be familiar with the Acts of the Apostles as a literary work. He could afford to think

along just one line about baptism. We do not, and for us to perceive the metaphor, which was all but automatic thinking for Paul, requires a great deal of effort. We must be prepared not to read in any other New Testament metaphors or themes to Paul's thought. But this is what many find very hard to do. Perhaps for doctrinal or liturgical reasons, they wish to find baptism spoken of in the same terms throughout the New Testament. Therefore they seem blind to Paul's metaphors about baptism in their determination to trace Paul's supposedly developed baptismal thought out of the supposedly primitive variety in Acts. What we are saying is that Paul's mind was free to picture baptism in any way he felt most appropriate; and generally he seems to have felt it most appropriate for his purposes to picture it in terms of a oneness between the believer and Jesus. The complications are ours, people for whom baptism has a more varied nature. Because of that we do not readily perceive the singularity of Paul's thought, and it therefore takes a great deal of effort for us to arrive at the point to which Paul came.

Now we come to this matter of summarising how each metaphor 'worked' in its context, seeking to gain some further clues concerning how to understand the metaphor of immersion into Christ which Paul generally associated with baptism.

In Rom.6:2 we noted that Paul's principal assertion was that the Christian had died to sin (a metaphorical

assertion, of course). The reference to baptism in the next verse was Paul's justification and explanation of that assertion. In baptism he related the believer to Christ in such a way that what was true of Christ became true also of the Christian. Paul could then deduce that because Christ had died, the Christian had died also. The fact that one death (Christ's) was literal while the other (the believer's) was metaphorical, made no difference to Paul. Such a oneness now existed between Christ and the believer that the Christian must be considered as dead, and as dead to sin (vv.7, 10-11), as Christ was. The task of speaking of the coming about of this oneness we found to be that of the metaphor βαπτίζω εἰς Χριστόν in v.3. It spoke of an immersion into Christ, and it was that joining to Jesus which led to the joining to his death. The metaphor achieved this union of the believer with Christ, and thus with his death, the believer therefore also being considered to be 'dead'.

However, with all metaphors there are limitations to how far they can be taken, and Paul carefully limited this one. While Paul wanted to be able to say the Christian had died to sin, he did not want to be forced to the conclusion that the Christian could not now sin. The baptisand might share Christ's death, and his death to sin, but there was no inevitability that he would sin no more. To circumvent that conclusion may be why Paul at this point avoided any statement that the believer

had shared Christ's resurrection. His wording in vv.4, 5, 8 and 11 carefully guarded against that. Partly he pitched the resurrection experience into the future, and partly he linked Christ's resurrection to a new life-style for the believer. While the union in baptism was a real union with Christ, it was a union with moral obligations, not with inevitable consequences. This was clear in vv.4, 11-12. Paul's language was not of the type which says: 'Because this is true, that inevitably follows...'. Rather it was of the type: 'Because this is true, that ought to follow...'. Of course, what was happening here was that Paul was being master of his rhetoric, and not allowing the rhetoric to be master of him. Meanings which Paul did not intend could have been drawn from this metaphor. His question in v.2 was not intended to make the Romans think that it was impossible for them to sin any more (through 'death' and 'resurrection' with Christ), but that it was inappropriate that they should do so now (through 'death' with Christ to sin and the adoption now of a new life-style). Paul was fencing in the metaphor - he was putting limits on the interpretations which could be drawn from it. Therefore, in Rom.6, the metaphor did relate the baptisand to Christ, and so to the events associated with Christ, but with some of the consequences of that relatedness qualified by Paul and made into moral obligations.

Gal.3 did not principally involve consideration of

an attachment of the baptisand to any 'event' concerning Christ, such as his death or resurrection. In this case there was no such development of the metaphor, and the emphasis was more singularly on the association of the believer with Jesus. We saw that the particular point Paul wanted to convey in his argument in that chapter was that the promise of God had been given to Christ (the 'offspring' of Abraham), and therefore also to those united to Christ by baptism. The sharing in this instance was of an inheritance (κληρονόμοι, v.29), not of death. This union was of such a nature that the baptisand gained the standing of Christ. It was on that basis that Paul could go on to argue in the next chapter that through what God's Son had done, Christians were now sons of God (vv.3-7). In v.7, Paul could say: ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός. The union which they experienced in baptism meant they shared the inheritance which was Christ's.

The second part of the metaphor in 3:27, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε, while confirming the intimacy with Christ, also carried the metaphor one stage further. It was one stage further, but with perhaps two implications. By saying they were, through baptism, clothed with Christ Paul implied that their lives should show forth Christ's qualities, should show the character of Christ. That their behaviour was, in fact, less than it should be was included in his subsequent argument in ch.4. That they had gained the standing of Christ was not just to

be a hidden, inner reality, because being clothed with Christ carried the sense that this should also be outwardly manifested. They were to live up to the reality of their union with Christ. The other aspect involved v.28 which spoke of unity *ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Because through baptism they were now clothed with Christ, it was his personality which was to the fore, not their national, social, or sexual situation. They were all equally united to him, and all equally covered by him - Paul says: *πάντες ... ὑμεῖς εἷς ἴστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Former distinctions, therefore, were held not to apply any more. Christ now clothed them in such a way that it was he who was seen to the fore in their lives. Paul did not see Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, males or females. He saw believers covered by Christ, believers baptized into Christ. Therefore, in Galatians, the union metaphor was viewed as gaining for the baptisand the standing of Christ, with subsidiary consequences of affecting the quality of the believer's life and obliterating social and other distinctions because of the over-riding unity of all being equally clothed with Christ.

Col.2:12 had obvious parallels with Rom.6 (a fact we shall mention again later). Once more we found the metaphor being used in such a way that events which happened to Christ were applied to the baptized believer. In particular, the believer was held to have been buried with Christ. The shared nature of the burial came out

clearly in συνταφέντες. It was Christ's burial and the Christian in his baptism was being 'buried with' Christ. And in that event, we felt, the baptisand shared Christ's experience of laying aside the body of flesh. Something true of Christ was true also of the baptized believer.

On this occasion the resurrection of Christ was also held to be applicable to the believer. This was so whether or not the ἐν ᾧ of v.12 referred to baptism. Because of his oneness with Christ, the baptisand was said to have been raised with Christ (συνηγέρθητε), not just potentially, not just at some time in the future. When dealing with this passage we discussed the apparent contradiction of this with the association of the baptisand with a future resurrection in Rom.6. We said then that there were two explanations for this. One concerned the status in each case of the references to resurrection. The resurrection of Rom.6 might be thought of eschatologically in terms of an 'event', and therefore could be considered a literal resurrection. But in Col.2 resurrection was certainly not intended in that sense, but, rather, was a term expressive of the new life of the believer - hence resurrection was being spoken of metaphorically. Given two distinct senses to resurrection, the question of contradiction no longer arose. We also stressed the different intention in Col.2 to that in Rom.6 (or 1 Cor.15). In Rom.6 Paul wished to urge moral effort, and it could have been damaging to that argument for him to have pressed the

image to any suggestion that believers were already raised. That might have encouraged an attitude of 'resting on their laurels'. Therefore Paul restricted the main applicability of the image to the death of Christ and its consequences regarding sin, and was very cautious, putting a strong emphasis on the future, when relating the believer to Christ's resurrection. Here, in Colossians, he was not urging moral effort but seeking to show the superiority of Christ, the importance of what he had done for believers (of course, in contrast to the 'empty deceit' of human tradition and philosophy, v.8). This time Paul had a real purpose in not too closely restricting the image, but allowing the consequences to flow. The end result was that Christ was seen to have done already all that was needful for the believer - precisely what Paul wanted the Colossians to think. This time the baptized believer was said actually to have been raised with Christ, whereas that was only implied or pitched into the future in Romans. This reinforces what we have just said about Paul being master of his own rhetoric. The metaphor used in Rom.6 and Col.2 about baptism was basically the same. But with the first he guarded the inferences in the area of resurrection very carefully, and in the second he allowed them much greater freedom. The point to note is that it was the author who was controlling these inferences from the metaphor, and not the metaphor itself. So, in Col.2 the work done by the metaphor was again to unite

the baptized believer to the events which concerned Christ, with Paul not restricting the association with Christ's resurrection. We could say the union with Christ in baptism almost had a wider remit here. It appeared to achieve more.

The utilisation of the metaphor in 1 Cor.1 was not very complex. As we saw, Paul spoke of baptism because he wanted to show that all the Corinthians had been immersed into Jesus. It was to him - not Paul, Apollos, or Peter - that their baptism joined them. Given that fact (and that he was crucified for them, and that he, of course, was undivided himself) they should not be formed into parties and giving allegiance to anyone other than Jesus. That relationship was superior to any other the Corinthians might have. It was unique in its strength and intimacy, and therefore could not, must not, be rivalled by any other attachment. What was true in Galatians regarding national, social and sexual distinctions, was true here of party loyalties, that their relationship with Christ over-rode all these other matters. The union with Christ was so pre-eminent that Paul could appeal to it in order to show the folly of giving any importance to other loyalties. The Corinthians were not united in baptism to Paul, Apollos or Cephas, but only to Christ. Therefore, no parties under the names of these others should exist. This reference to the metaphor, then, was intended to show the strength, and because of the strength, the uniqueness, of the relat-

ionship to Christ.

The 1 Cor.10 reference, using the name of Moses, was almost intended to do the opposite. Paul was not trying to show that the union with Christ was weak, but he was trying to convince the Corinthians that it alone could not be relied upon for salvation. Once more the metaphor was being seen as establishing a state of affairs with consequences which were not inevitable. If these Corinthians gave themselves over to an immoral life, then no matter how fine, unique, or strong might be the relationship with Christ they had enjoyed since their baptism, it would count for nothing, and they would fall (v.12) as the Israelites did (vv.5ff.). Of course, that Paul should need to say this implied that the baptismal union with Christ was viewed as being of some importance, if not permanence, by at least the Corinthians. Paul would not have needed to explain the folly of relying on their baptism, had not some of them been doing precisely that. So Paul illustrated the danger of the Corinthians' situation by picturing a baptism into Moses for the Israelites. Since, in this midrash of Paul's, that solidarity with Moses did not save the people of Israel, neither could the Corinthians consider that the relationship they entered with Christ at baptism would be permanent if they lived carelessly. To consider the oneness with Jesus to be automatically permanent would be to come to an unacceptable conclusion from the picture of the immersion into Jesus. Paul

redrew the picture for the Corinthians, specifically painting out the idea of automatic permanence to the relationship. Now the baptisand's lifestyle had to conform to one appropriate for someone so closely related to Jesus. Therefore, whereas in 1 Cor.1:13 Paul showed the strength of the metaphor, here in 10:2ff. he limited it. The achievements of the metaphor were restricted.

In contrast to these last two comparatively straightforward uses of the metaphor, 1 Cor.12 employed it in a fairly complex way. As we saw, Paul chose to speak of baptism into the body, rather than the more usual 'baptism into Christ', in order to introduce the analogy of the body in the succeeding verses. That meant that Paul was to some extent saying: 'As limbs are in the body, so you are in Christ'. This was what v.27 amounted to: *ὁμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους*. This role of the baptismal metaphor, of leading into a particular analogy, is important when considering the implications of the immersion into the one body, the achievements spoken of here by this union with Christ. The analogy of the body was not intended by Paul to apply at all points. For example, it could be said of a body that it was impossible to speak of its existence apart from, or prior to, its members. Yet, even in this chapter, Paul could distinguish Jesus from Christians by the statement *ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ*. Illustrations and analogies are not generally intended as licences for fertile imaginations, and this analogy had

to be understood only in the terms spelled out in vv.14-26. All of the different facets there - many-membered, inter-dependent, common origin, mutual care - were designed to show a belonging together of the members, the underlying reason being that they all belonged to the same body. It was these same facets which Paul regarded as the consequences of the union of Christian to Christ in baptism. He wanted the Corinthians to end all their jealousies, for each to accept the other for who he was and for the gifts he brought. This enabled Paul to draw the conclusions he had been leading up to (vv.28ff.). So the analogy with the body was not intended to carry just any implications, but only those mentioned by Paul, which might be summed up as 'union with each other through common attachment to the same body' - and in the case of the baptized believer that body was Christ's. The union effected in baptism was not applicable solely between the baptisand and Jesus, but also established a union amongst all the baptized. This extended the achievements of the metaphor of union in a new direction.

One feature emerged here from the analogy of the body which is worth comparing with a passage already studied. We noted that Gal.3:28 rendered national, social and sexual distinctions void because of the overriding unity in Christ. In v.13 here there was a reference to Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, which was very similar to the Galatians passage. But this time, with the analogy of the body following, the point was

not that the union with Christ obliterated such distinctions, but rather that the union made co-existence possible and desirable. The emphasis was on the unity of varied elements. The distinctions were not viewed as having no reality. Given, in fact, the principles of strong helping weak, and of different parts having differing abilities, the variety had positive worth. What Paul was seeking to show the Corinthians was that by baptism all of them now belonged to, and therefore served, the same body. Following on that fact, the implication was: 'Now get on and do it, and stop fighting each other'. Again the baptismal oneness with Christ was considered to carry moral obligations.

Finally, in the baptismal context, one other feature of the analogy of the body received support, and that was the common origin of the parts (see vv.18, 24f.) in the one act of divine creation. Viewing the *iv* near the beginning of v.13 as instrumental, we took the first reference there to the Spirit to refer to the agency of the Spirit in effecting the baptismal union of the believer with Christ. This agency, Paul made clear (as in the preceding section), applied to 'all'. The union of each to Christ had a common origin in the work of the Spirit. The relationship to Christ was not accomplished by the power of man, according to Paul, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a similar fashion there was a common sharing of an experience of the Spirit following

the union with Christ - a common result of the union. In general, the union was seen to be under the control of the Spirit.

The main features, then, from 1 Cor.12 associated with the union with Christ, were: that it implied a secondary union between all who were individually united to Christ; that the fundamental union with Christ made co-existence between the very varied participants in that union both possible and desirable (this being a moral obligation following on the union); and that the agent controlling the union was the Spirit.

Resulting from this summary of the usage of the union metaphor by Paul, there is an immediately obvious conclusion: that while the same basic metaphor is being associated with baptism on each occasion, the implications of it are unique to each passage. There is not one blanket image being applied to every context. Each baptismal metaphor employed by Paul does not 'achieve' exactly the same results. The metaphor of union with Christ in baptism is not being, as it were, taken off the shelf and inserted in the Roman letter, and then replaced; taken off the shelf and inserted in the Galatian letter, and then replaced; and so on. It is not some formula which can be applied without adjustment. Rather the metaphor has had to be carefully woven into the pattern of each letter in which it appears, with fine adjustments and qualifications made as necessary. Then it takes its place in the overall design and does

not appear as some crudely stuck on 'patch'. The metaphor is fitted to its context.

Following our look here at the different aspects of the metaphor in Paul's writings we could put them all together and claim that the composite was the full version of the metaphor for Paul. That would then involve a metaphor of union: with moral obligations, including implications of showing the character of Christ; which gains for the baptisand the standing of Christ; which obliterates national, social, and sexual distinctions; which upholds but unifies such distinctions; which on some occasions only relates the believer to part of what happened to Christ, and at other times to all of it; which effected a relationship to Christ which is strong, far superior to and thereby incomparable with any ordinary human relationship; which is not so strong that its consequences can be thought of as inevitable for all time; which unites all those who are individually united to Christ but who may themselves be very varied; which is effected by the Spirit. Because of the total failure to take account of the context in which differing aspects appear, this composite picture is virtually self-contradictory. It is immediately obvious that Paul never carried any such 'monster metaphor' around in his head. What we may say is that he had a metaphor of union with Christ as his basic picture of baptism. Then, given the varying reasons for speaking of baptism at all, Paul amplified and adapted the metaphor to suit. There-

fore the metaphor appeared in an individual form in each context. Systematising only produces a grotesque hybrid containing the elements of six unique metaphors. Given such uniqueness, what is meant by 'oneness' or 'union' with Christ in baptism cannot be deduced from a composite picture, but has to be determined afresh on each occasion. Each metaphor may grow from the same stem, and out of the same soil, but they all flower in differing hues and patterns.

What we can do, perhaps, is to refer to 'union' or 'oneness' with Christ as Paul's super-model for baptism. This is the dominant model for Paul. It is the central aspect of each of the unique metaphors used in the varying passages. It is not a composite of all the metaphors, but, rather, their central theme. They all 'achieve' (paint a picture of) this oneness in some way. Each particular metaphor takes this theme and applies it appropriately and individually for the needs of the passage in which it is set. We may recall TeSelle's illustration of George Herbert's poem 'The Flower': "One metaphor predominates and many combinations are rung on it. ...Every succeeding line in the poem modifies and enriches the central metaphor of renewal."¹ This seems to be what Paul does with baptism. A general picture of immersion into Christ is given, but each picture modifies that theme in its own way, thus enrich-

1. See above, p.96.

ing our total appreciation of this theme. Generally, baptism for Paul was an experience of union with Christ. He could speak of baptism in other terms (as at 1 Cor. 15:29), but the dominant thought was of this oneness. It constituted the super-model. Therefore, when he needed to speak of such oneness in his letters, Paul found it appropriate to speak of baptism.

Where could such a study as this go from here? What other lines could be taken up and followed with profit?

One obvious issue would be why Paul chose to picture baptism as union with Christ. We have seen that to do so was very profitable for Paul towards answering many of his theological problems. But that does not tell us why Paul viewed baptism in this way in the first place. Why should that picture present itself? After all, we know that alternative modes of thought about baptism, those which we found in Acts, most certainly existed. Some aspects of those seem to have been closely connected with John the Baptist, and (some would say) very far back before him with the significance of Jewish lust-rations. Why should Paul, the one time Pharisee, not use a way of thinking about baptism which would seem to arise out of the bosom of Judaism?

It is possible that Paul was never as close to the John the Baptist tradition as those who formed the leadership of the early Jerusalem church, some of whom may well have been John's disciples originally (see Jn.1:

35ff.). And it is the practice of that Jerusalem church which is said to be reflected in at least the early chapters of Acts. Paul was not close to John - possibly as a Pharisee he was on the receiving end of John's tongue. Only long after John was gone did Paul become a Christian. Even then, Paul may well not have been involved with mainstream Judean Christianity. In Gal. 1:17 Paul tells of a stay in Arabia followed by a time in Damascus. Only then, after three years, did he go to Jerusalem (v.18), but for a mere 15 days. This was followed by some 14 years in Syria and Cilicia (v.21) before there was another trip to Jerusalem (2:1). Thus much of Paul's time was spent away from other leaders, and arguably therefore away from a 'Jerusalem model' of baptism. He may have been sufficiently isolated to have come to his own distinct understanding, his own model of union.

Others, of course, have thought that much of Paul's baptismal thought was not his own but was couched in terms borrowed from some other religion or thought system. Certainly in some of the mystery religions there were concepts of union of the initiate with the deity. The Egyptian Pyramid Texts, for example, at a critical stage of the funeral liturgy of King Unas, include an invocation which is addressed to Atum (the patron god of Heliopolis who was associated with the sun god Re): "Recite: O Atum, it is thy son - this one here, Osiris, whom thou hast caused to live (and) to remain in life.

He liveth (and) this Unas (also) liveth; he (i.e. Osiris) dieth not, (and) this Unas (also) dieth not." ¹. Others pushed the idea of unity to outright identity. Many scholars have hastened to show vast differences, however, between Paul's thought and that of such religions, and have shown that almost all our evidence for these religions is late (certainly not earlier than the second century AD) when compared with Paul. But it is still possible to argue that, while not directly borrowing from any religion, Paul perhaps held certain presuppositions in common with many of the religions of his day. In the syncretistic milieu of the Mediterranean, certain general concepts may have been 'in the air' and be reflected in Paul's phraseology. Being an educated man, much travelled throughout the region, Paul would be familiar with the main tenets of other religions. Many of his converts, too, would come from these religions. Paul could have absorbed some of their concepts and used them almost without thinking. Comparisons with other religions are not germane to this work, and therefore we shall not pursue this line. ². However, if what we

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1. Pyramid Texts 167a-d, quoted by S.G.F. Brandon, "The Ritual Technique of Salvation in the Ancient Near East," The Saviour God (Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation, ed., S.G.F. Brandon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), p.20.
 2. A fairly comprehensive bibliography of works with varying viewpoints concerning the significance of the 'mystery religions' is given by G. Wagner, Pauline Baptism and The Pagan Mysteries, trans., J.P. Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1967).

have done in this study has clarified Paul's thought on baptism, then others will be that much more able to make the correct comparisons.

But perhaps an even more fruitful area of study lies in the fact mentioned a moment ago, that many of Paul's converts - those to whom he wrote - were known to have come from other religions. It was not Judaism which formed their background. They were not steeped in the practices of the Law, and the fame of John the Baptist had not reached them. Now, we should hardly think Paul only preached to non-Jews. Many converts would have a Jewish background, or at least be 'God-fearers' with an attachment to the synagogue. Yet, Paul did consider himself to be "entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised" (Gal.2:7). Given that many of these people were more acquainted with pagan religions than Judaism; ^{1.} given that Paul was the kind of man who was prepared to conform himself in order to reach others (τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος ... ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους ... τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς

1. Nock says: "There can be little doubt that the first Gentiles to be converted were almost without exception men and women who had fallen under Jewish influence". Nock, Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background, p.3. But he pictures early Christianity facing a quite different world when it moved further afield: "It faced a world which did not know Judaism or which hated and despised it, a world which was unacquainted with the prophets and familiar with cults not pretending to exclusiveness, with mysteries not always requiring a moral standard of their devotees, with an unchangeable and unmoral order of destiny determined, or at least indicated, by the stars, with magic of various kinds". Op. cit., p.3.

σώσω - 1 Cor.9:21-22), it is not a matter for surprise that Paul should employ language readily understandable by his readers. It seems most unlikely that this could ever account in total for Paul's choice of language. But it must be remembered that it is a basic rule of metaphorical language that a 'fit interpreter' is required for that language to be understood, and that presupposes an awareness on the part of the writer of what his readers are capable of rightly interpreting. With that knowledge, to select models appropriate to the intended readership becomes not only a possibility but a necessity.¹ Therefore, having in this work gone some way to identifying the metaphors used by Paul, it would be a matter for further fruitful study to consider the reasons behind his choice of those metaphors, realising they had to be readily understood by the recipients of his letters. Such a study would apply to the union with Christ baptismal metaphor, but could be widened to refer to any metaphor.

One other issue on which a study of metaphors could have a bearing is the question of authorship. We chose to study Col.2:12, Colossians being a letter many hold

1. Käsemann feels something of this kind lies behind Paul's use of the idea of death and resurrection with Christ in the Romans epistle: "...he must have used an understanding which was current in the Hellenistic community, since the idea of dying and rising again with the Redeemer can even less be explained in terms of Judaism". Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, p.161.

to be non-Pauline. Nothing we have looked at is sufficient to make anything but the mildest of comments on the authorship issue. But it is a matter of interest that when the author there speaks of baptism he does so in a very Pauline way, that is, he uses the same basic metaphor concerning baptism as that found in the Pauline 'pillar epistles', with especial similarity to Romans. Were 'union with Christ' the only possible way for a writer to express himself regarding baptism, we should not consider this such a remarkable matter. However, we now know that it is very possible to speak of baptism in quite different terms, our particular example being Luke in the Acts. The sameness of basic metaphor between Colossians and the rest of the main core of Pauline literature would either most naturally lead to the conclusion that the Colossians' passage came from Paul, or, failing that, that it came from someone who gained his understanding of baptism from Paul, indeed, from someone who might be said to belong to a 'Pauline school'.

The real benefit of studying the metaphor is that, by so doing, considerations of the precise vocabulary can almost be avoided. This could be illustrated by comparing three passages which we have studied: Col.2:12; 1 Cor.10:2; Acts 22:16. The only vocabulary in common is that all have either a noun or verb associated with baptism. So, in terms of vocabulary there is nothing to guide us regarding authorship. In terms of simple grammar, the fact that 1 Cor.10:2 and Acts 22:16

both use a verbal form would provide a small link between these two. And if the middle *ἐβαπτίσαντο* were to be preferred in 1 Cor.10:2 we might feel we were homing in on a real connection between the two, because *βάπτισαι* is also middle in Acts. If there were no other considerations, we could think that here is a verbal form, not used generally elsewhere in the New Testament of *βαπτίζω*, which points to a common authorship of Acts and 1 Corinthians. But were we then to consider the metaphors (or metaphorical contexts) of each passage, it should become clear immediately that 1 Corinthians and Colossians belong together, both using at root the metaphor of union with Christ. Acts stands out on its own, the context being one of washing away of sins. Naturally this example is simplistic and many other factors need to be taken into account when deciding on authorship. But, as regards our reference, Col.2:12, such issues do show that its baptismal metaphor belongs very firmly within a Pauline framework.

The same could not be said for another verse which mentions baptism, but one we chose not to study, Eph.4:5. There the words *ἐν βάπτισμα* appear. The only other occasions in a Pauline letter that the noun *βάπτισμα* appears are Rom.6:4 and Col.2:12. In these instances, as we now know, it is used in a very different way, set in a metaphorical phrase. To use the noun in the stark, unexplained manner of Eph.4:5 is quite unlike Paul. Even the one baptismal reference of Paul which we said

was non-metaphorical, 1 Cor.15:29, was nevertheless charged with meaning and vitality. But in Eph.4:5 there is no colour to the word, no qualifier, no jostling of phrases - simply this empty reference. This is foreign to what we have become accustomed to with Paul, and would count as one factor weighing against a Pauline authorship of Ephesians. (This foreignness to Pauline usage is the principle reason no study of this reference was made. Given that both Ephesians and Colossians are called into question regarding Pauline authorship, at least Col.2:12 deserved inclusion in a study of Pauline baptismal references because of its prima facie relatedness to the obviously Pauline material.)

Naturally no conclusions can be drawn regarding the authorship of Colossians from just one verse, but to see the metaphorical link between that verse and references to baptism which undoubtedly originated with Paul shows the relevance of the study of models to such issues. Of course, in a full-blown study on the question of authorship, all models used in one work, not just baptismal, would need to be examined and compared to the models of another. For example, if it could be shown that, even though vocabulary differed, the pictures remained the same, then some new conclusions about authorship might be drawn. Undoubtedly complications would set in, such as whether vocabulary or images were more basic or enduring in a writer's thought. Certainly the task would have its difficulties, but such studies

might inject some new life into rather old, tired, and stale debates.

Staleness would not be a word applicable to Paul's baptismal language. He chose the vitality of metaphorical thinking, avoiding the dryness of literal language. (This need not be taken to denigrate Luke's narrative, but it could be argued that the vitality of Acts comes from the stories Luke has to tell rather than from the language used to tell them.) He made his references to baptism live for his readers according to their ability to share his pictures. We are far removed from Paul's world today, far removed from his language. But perhaps here the way of metaphor can win a final victory. For if we, today, will be a people of lively imagination, then Paul's metaphors can convey these same pictures to us, and we too can share his understanding of baptism.

APPENDIX

There are a number of texts in Pauline material ¹. which many take to be references to baptism, yet which we have not studied. They are all of a type in which neither βαπτίζω nor βάπτισμα is used, but because of the terminology employed they are regarded as baptismal. One is Eph.5:26 which refers to what Christ has done for the church: ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι. A washing metaphor appears here and is taken to be a reference to baptism. Titus 3:5 uses the same basic metaphor when it says that Christ saved διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, and is similarly interpreted therefore. For a different reason some have detected a baptismal reference in the 'faithful saying' at 2 Tim.2:11: εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζηήσομεν. The reason here is the parallel held to exist with Rom.6:8, which follows a baptismal section that refers to a sharing of the death of Christ and a new life for the believer because of Christ's resurrection. Another group of references: 2 Cor.1:21-22; Eph.1:13-14; 4:30, all employ a 'seal' metaphor based on σφραγίζω. That verb did later (probably in the 2nd century) become a technical word for baptism, and some believe that it already holds that sense in the New Testament in these locations. But the most championed of all such references is undoubtedly

1. In this instance the term 'Pauline' is intended to include all that bears the name of Paul.

1 Cor.6:11 which many a writer will use as a proof-text on some point about baptism without feeling any need to justify a baptismal interpretation of that verse.¹

It is yet another verse with a washing metaphor, the main interest being in the words: ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιάσθητε, ἀλλὰ ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. We shall take this verse as something of a test-case, for many of the considerations which apply to it will be adaptable to these other 'deutero-baptismal' texts. Obviously we cannot simply say straight off that a washing metaphor is not one Paul employs with regard to baptism, and therefore dismiss this as a baptismal reference, as that would be rather begging the question. Thus our procedure will be to take the points mentioned by commentators by which this verse is interpreted as baptismal, and consider how well they stand up.

The first matter is ἀπελούσασθε, 'you were washed'. Barrett says ἐβαπτίσθητε would have been as easy to use "though the use of the non-technical word shows that it is the inward meaning rather than the outward circum-

1. For example, in a chapter on "Paul's Teaching on Baptism", Marsh has a sub-section entitled "Cleansing from Sin". He begins by stating that Paul has little to say about the purifying power of baptism, apart from "only one sentence which may be called a definite reference to the cleansing power of the sacrament". Marsh, The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism, p.134. By this he means 1 Cor.6:11. However, no justification is given for a baptismal interpretation of this verse.

stances of the rite that is important to Paul".¹ Of course, some such claim as that really must be made, for the word 'washed' by itself has a long history as expressing a desire for inner cleansing with no thought of baptism. The language of cleansing is cross-cultural and need not involve a physical act.² So ἀπελούσασθε could only be justified as a baptismal reference because of some contextual supportive material, or usage elsewhere. In these connections, three points are usually made:

a) The reference to ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ supports a baptismal interpretation because of the frequent association of this expression with baptism. Certainly, similar expressions are used in connection with baptism, but, as we have seen, not by Paul. In his writings such a phrase occurs but once in a baptismal context, and then only by implication. Even on that occasion, 1 Cor.1:13, 15, Paul's expression is different - εἰς τὸ ὄνομα. It is briefer, less picturesque, and uses a different preposition. In any case, one baptismal locus is not sufficient to see other references to 'in the name' as necessarily also baptismal. After all, in this letter, the name is also

1. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.141.

2. Or, to come to the present age, are we to think of baptism when we sing: 'O happy day, O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away...'?

called on (1:2), appealed by (1:10), and judgment pronounced in it (5:4). And, lest it be forgotten, the name formula here in 6:11 does not just follow 'washed' but also 'sanctified' and 'justified'. There is a big difference between the expression 'to baptize in the name' and the attachment of a familiar formula to a string of phrases which describe and amplify the freeing from sin. The point of the name formula here is to associate all these activities with Jesus, to show the means by which this washing, sanctification, and justification come about. There is no reason automatically to link the phrase with baptism. More often than not throughout the New Testament it does not refer to baptism, and especially does not do so in Paul's writings.

b) The reference to ἐν τῷ πνεύματι gives the experience spoken of the context of the Spirit, again something which recurs in references to baptism. However, once more we must say that while that may indeed happen in some parts of the New Testament (and we found it to be so in several baptismal references in Acts), it is not commonly a feature of Paul's writing. In fact, 1 Cor.12:13 is the sole Pauline baptismal context in which the Spirit is mentioned. We cannot interpret this verse as baptismal because of a reference to the Spirit when it would be more typical of Paul not to mention the Spirit when speaking of baptism! In any case, if ἐν τῷ πνεύματι is linked to ἀπελούσασθε then we have the phrase 'washed in the Spirit'. That

may be a possible rendering, but no other passage in the New Testament speaks of baptism in those terms. In fact, it would seem better to take ἐν τῷ πνεύματι more with ἡγιασθητε ¹. and ἐδικαιώθητε, ². and this Barrett does. ³.

c) The coincidence of language between this verse and Acts 22:16 is seen as confirming a baptismal reference here. In the Acts verse - a baptismal context - ἀπολούω occurs, and in the same voice. Moreover, there is even a reference to calling on 'his name'. But the logic of this line of argument seems very strange. Is Paul to be supposed to remember verbatim Ananias' words (even down to the middle voice used), ⁴. and then set them down again years later confident that the Corinthians will perceive that they refer to baptism? The argument also presumes an absolutely literal rendering in Acts 22:16 of the words spoken, although they do not occur in the other Acts' accounts of Paul's conversion. This whole line of thought is far-fetched indeed. An alternative, which still retains the influence of Acts on this passage, is to presume some sort

1. Cf., Rom.8:8f.; Gal.5:22-25.

2. Cf., Rom.8:4; 14:17.

3. See Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p.143.

4. This seems to be how Flemington sees it, as he points out that the words occur in a narrative of Paul's conversion. See Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, fn., p.56.

of literary dependence of Paul on Acts. And that could not be seriously proposed even by those who give an early date to Acts. Paul's meaning cannot be interpreted in the light of similar words in a specific context in a later work.¹ A final blow is dealt to this argument when it is realised that even in Acts 22:16 ἀπολούω does not refer to baptism. The command βάπτισαι is mentioned separately in the verse, and while ἀπολούω may well describe the writer's understanding of the significance of baptism, he does not identify it with baptism. And, in the Acts verse, the reference to the 'name' is very different from that in Corinthians. Paul is told to invoke the name of the Just One as he washes away his sins. There is perhaps what we might call a metaphor of prayer here,² but that is far removed from

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1. It could be argued that there was a general understanding in the early church that language of 'washing' and 'cleansing' referred to the act of baptism, and that both Luke and Paul drew on this. However, that would be hard to prove, especially since there seems to be an adequate background in the Old Testament for 'cleansing' language with no 'act' of washing necessarily in mind, e.g., the Psalmist who prayed 'Wash me...cleanse me...' hardly expected God to pour water over him, but he did seek the removal of his sins (Ps. 51:2; cf., also, v. 7; Jer. 13:27; Zech. 13:1; Prov. 30:12; etc.).
 2. Beasley-Murray says: "The name of the Lord Jesus is confessed by the baptismal candidate and is invoked by him. Just as baptism is an occasion of confessing faith in Christ and is itself a confession, so it is the occasion of prayer by the baptizand and is itself an act of prayer. ...He that in baptism 'calls on the name of the Lord' (Acts 22.16) undergoes baptism in a prayerful spirit..." Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, pp. 101-2.

what is being said in 1 Cor.6:11.

There is, therefore, no good reason put forward which would lead us to find a baptismal reference in this verse. Many of these considerations apply also to the other supposedly baptismal passages. The point is this, that all of them make perfectly adequate sense on their own without a baptismal reference. If baptism were not known to exist, then there would still be good sense in these verses. Nothing compels a baptismal interpretation. It may be that sometimes commentators have been blind to the nature of the metaphorical language which is used at these points, and in their blindness have too readily settled for a physical act as the easy mode of interpretation. Other writers, with a wider vision, could now fruitfully explore these metaphors.

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